

Emir receives Hillary Clinton



Clinton praises Qatar's peace efforts in Lebanon and Sudan

The United States accords utmost priority to Lebanon's sovereignty and its peoples' safety and security and is fully committed to ensure peace in that country, US Secretary of State Hilary Clinton asserted in Doha yesterday. Addressing reporters at a joint briefing along with HE the Prime Minister Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabor al-Thani, Clinton vowed that America would continue to make all possible efforts to restore lasting peace, order and stability in Lebanon as desired by the people of that country. While lauding the efforts being made by Qatar in recent years to achieve peace in Lebanon and Sudan, Clinton described this country as a leader in its own right and a trusted friend making concrete efforts to bring peace and stability in the Middle East region. Clinton appealed to Lebanese leaders to do whatever possible to ensure a peaceful existence to its residents. She recalled the initiatives made by Qatari leaders in bringing peace and stability to that country.

"What people in Lebanon need is a land wholly free of any political conflicts...."

When it was pointed out by a reporter that the opposition parties in Lebanon accused the US of derailing the peace initiatives in Lebanon made by Saudi Arabia and Syria, Clinton asserted that her country's stand on the issue was clear to all engaged in the peace process and Washington did not do anything against the interests of the Lebanese people on that score. Hailing Qatar's efforts in Darfur peace talks, Clinton said that a diplomatic solution to the Sudan issue was possible without shedding any further blood.

Clinton said she had fruitful talks with GCC leaders, including HH the Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, during her current regional tour. The peace process in the Middle East and stability in Iraq and Afghanistan figured prominently in the discussions, she added. At the briefing, HE Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim said that through the dialogues that Qatar had initiated in recent years, the country had made it clear to the whole world that "it has always stood for solutions and not for complicating situations".

He said: "Already there are many problems in the region and we do not want any new issue to be added to it."

Responding to a query related to Saudi Arabia's role in reaching a long lasting solution in Lebanon, the Prime Minister said that King Abdullah had demonstrated remarkable wisdom on issues related to the region and Qatar would continue to wholeheartedly back such initiatives from the Saudi Arabian ruler.

A failure in reaching a permanent solution to Lebanon crisis would result in another conflict and it would derail all good efforts made by this country, said Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim. Clinton said that mounting pressure would be exerted on Iran at different levels to ensure that its nuclear activities were for peaceful purposes. She said America's commitment to the security of the Middle East was unwavering.