

Russian foreign minister says Nasrallah assassination aimed at provoking U.S.-Iran war

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Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov speaks at a press conference during the 79th Session of the United Nations General Assembly at the United Nations headquarters in New York City on

United Nations, September 29 (RHC)-- Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov says that Israel's assassination of Hezbollah Secretary-General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah may have been intended to provoke a war between the United States and Iran.

Lavrov told reporters at a news conference after addressing the UN General Assembly on Saturday that a lot of people believe Israel's assassination of Nasrallah was aimed at provoking Iran and the US "to unleash a full-blown war in the entire region."

Killing the Hezbollah leader was "not simply a political assassination. It's very cynical as an act," Lavrov said. "I think – well not even, I think, but a lot of people say – that Israel wants to create the grounds to drag the U.S. directly into this and so to create these grounds, it is trying to provoke Iran," Lavrov added.

"The Iran leadership, I think, are behaving extremely responsibly. And this is necessary. This is something that we should take due note of."

Speaking at the UN Security Council meeting on Friday, Lavrov said: "The Middle East is once again on the brink of a big war," calling for active diplomatic efforts to prevent the "most catastrophic scenario."

In his UN General Assembly speech, Lavrov condemned the Israeli regime for its "inhumane attack on Lebanon." "Another glaring example of terrorist methods as a means of achieving political aims is the inhumane attack on Lebanon that transformed civilian technology into a lethal weapon," Lavrov said, calling for an immediate international investigation.

Lavrov also told reporters that the U.S. was likely aware of the Israeli regime forces' plans to launch a "terrorist attack" against Lebanon using communication devices. He said the complexity of the attack and the leaking of details to Western media indicate Washington's possible complicity in the terrorist operation.

Last week, thousands of hand-held pagers and walkie-talkies used by Hezbollah members exploded across Lebanon simultaneously, killing dozens and injuring thousands, including many civilians. The attack, widely blamed on Israeli spy agency Mossad, drew international condemnation, with UN Human Rights Commissioner Volker Turk calling it a "shocking" and "unacceptable" act that violates human rights laws.

Tel Aviv has not claimed responsibility for the pager attacks, and its allies have denied any knowledge. However, according to Lavrov, Western media reports regarding the details and preparations "indicate to varying degrees the involvement and, at the very least, awareness of Washington concerning the preparation of that terrorist attack."

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