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Russia Slams U.S. Proposal for 'Summit for Democracy'

By Philippe Rater for AFP

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Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov **Russian Foreign Ministry**

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on Friday attacked a U.S. proposal to hold a "Summit for Democracy," saying such a gathering would only deepen fissures on the international stage.

Speaking in a UN ministerial session organized by his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi, the veteran Russian diplomat said that developing multilateralism should "be done on a collegial basis."

But he said that "in recent times, we have witnessed attempts to establish an international order... to impose upon everyone new rules that have been drawn up in non-inclusive bodies and circles."

"It is in this context that the U.S. administration wishes to organize a 'Summit for

Democracy,'" he said, referring to a proposal made by U.S. President Joe Biden, which Washington says would aim to rally international support to fight corruption, combat authoritarianism and promote human rights.

"But that risks making international relations even more strained and create fault lines in the world, when what we need is a common and united purpose," said Lavrov.

Washington has not yet revealed details or even a possible date for such a gathering of democratic states.

"Of course, it will be Washington that puts together the list of states to be invited to this summit," said Lavrov, speaking after his U.S. counterpart Antony Blinken, who had not mentioned the potential summit.

"The creation of an alliance for multilateralism that was put together by Germany or France might seem natural," he added.

"But Berlin and Paris have other ideas, and want to publish documents so that the European Union is the cornerstone of the multilateral system."

Lavrov said the proposal amounted to "imposing exclusivity in defiance of equality" between countries.

"We do not see the multilateral world as a way of working together to take collective decisions, we see it rather as a way to impose rules on others," he added, in a speech praised by the Chinese foreign minister.

Wang said that Beijing believes "dividing the world into ideological camps goes against multilateralism," and called on UN members to "seek equality and justice, not hegemony."

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