

UPI  
29 September 1987

FADLALLAH SAYS HEZBOLLAH DID NOT TAKE BRIBES  
BY RIAJ KAJ  
BEIRUT, LEBANON

The spiritual leader of the pro-Iranian Hezbollah Tuesday challenged world intelligence agencies to prove a "ridiculous" report his group took bribes to halt terrorist attacks and said he has no evidence Saudi Arabia plotted with the CIA to kill him. DSA

Sheikh Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah said he couldn't confirm information in American journalist Bob Woodward's book, "Veil: The Secret War of the CIA: 1981-1987," that the Saudis collaborated with the CIA to kill him in a bomb attack March 8, 1985.

"I don't have tangible proofs that Saudi Arabia's intelligence was involved but also I don't have information to deny this," Fadlallah told United Press International at his residence in Beirut's southern suburbs.

"But on the basis of the special relations between America and the gulf countries, we think that it is possible that America can pressure these states into financing some American terrorist actions."

Monday, Saudi Arabia denied Woodward's allegations that the kingdom was involved in an attempt to assassinate the spiritual leader of Lebanon's radical Hezbollah, or Party of God, movement.

Woodward, a Washington Post reporter, said in his book CIA director William Casey arranged for Saudi intelligence agents to undertake the assassination attempt. Fadlallah survived but 80 people were killed and 200 others were wounded in the blast in the Beir Al Abed neighborhood, a sanctuary for pro-Iranian fundamentalists.

According to Woodward, Casey then endorsed a Saudi effort to persuade Hezbollah to stop attacking American and Western targets by offering them \$2 million in aid and university scholarships for party members.

Fadlallah categorically denied that either he or any of his followers were bribed.

"We consider this report as ridiculous. If Casey was honest in this regard, we assume that the Saudis claimed that they bribed us to impress the Americans and make it sound that they can contain our revolution with their money.

"I challenge any intelligence network to prove any of (this) information ..." he said.

Fadlallah, described by some observers as the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini of Lebanon, noted the bombing of the U.S. Embassy annex in the Christian area of Awkar outside east Beirut occurred after the explosion in Beir Al Abed.

"Let's assume that such a deal was struck and I was responsible, but how come that other (anti-Western) operations occurred, for example the explosion in Awkar?" he said.

Continued

A man claiming to represent the pro-Iranian Islamic Jihad -- Holy War -- group, in a telephone call to a Western news agency had claimed responsibility for the embassy annex bombing in September 1985 in which 12 people died and 60 were wounded.

Fadlallah also described as an "American fad" the capture of Fawaz Younis, a Shiite Moslem accused of involvement in a 1985 hijacking of a Jordanian plane. Younis was captured in international waters by FBI agents nine days ago and brought to the United States.

"It is a fad designed to absorb anger by the American people who felt that the American administration failed to free its hostages held in Lebanon," he said.

Fadlallah refused to talk at length on the plight of foreign hostages, but said "the issue was moving slowly" toward a solution. More than 20 foreigners are believed to be held in Lebanon.

Western intelligence sources have accused Hezbollah of having links to some of the kidnappings but leaders of the group have denied involvement.