

**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**



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**President Vladimir Putin held a meeting with the Government Cabinet, The Kremlin,  
Moscow, January 30, 2006**

Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov informed the President on his upcoming participation in a number of international events in London – a conference on Afghanistan, consultations on the situation in Palestine after the parliamentary election, and talks on the Iranian nuclear programme and the settlement process in Kosovo.

The meeting also discussed a number of different social and economic issues.

Excerpts from Transcript of Meeting with the Government Cabinet

**ON UPCOMING INTERNATIONAL EVENTS IN LONDON**

**PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN:** (Addressing Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov) Sergei Viktorovich, let's begin with your upcoming trip. Could you tell us, please, what is planned in London and what outcome you hope to reach through this work?

**FOREIGN MINISTER SERGEI LAVROV:** A number of events are taking place in London today, tomorrow and on Wednesday. The conference on Afghanistan is of fundamental importance as it will review the results of the peace process as carried out so far on the basis of earlier decisions. The parliamentary election in Afghanistan marked the conclusion of this stage of the peace process. Now we need to reach an agreement on the next steps to take to support the recovery of Afghanistan's economy, intensify the combat against the drugs threat, which is linked to economic problems, and ensure a political process that will guarantee balanced political institutions and prevent the Taliban, who are making attempts to regain power, from doing so.

A final document has already been outlined and it reflects overall the main tasks at hand and the Russian proposals for their solution. We hope that we will be able to approve this document in London.

A number of ministerial-level talks are also to take place in London on the Middle East, Iran and the settlement process in Kosovo. Regarding the Middle East, the four mediators – Russia, the United States, the European Union and the UN General Secretary – are to evaluate the situation following Hamas' victory in the elections to the Palestinian legislative council, and come to an agreement on a coordinated common position that will enable the peace process to continue, while respecting the democratic choice of the Palestinian people and at the same time not giving destructive forces and extremists from whichever side the chance to break off the prior agreements that the 'Quartet' elaborated and that are aimed at ensuring a full and lasting settlement.

Regarding Iran, the Russian, U.S., European Union and Chinese ministers plan to hold a meeting just before the session of the IAEA Board of Governors on February 2, at which we will elaborate a position that will, as far as Russia is concerned, ensure that the IAEA has the chance to obtain full clarification of all the issues that have arisen regarding Iran's nuclear programme. We will also try to ensure that the moratorium on uranium enrichment that Iran did declare remains in place in this current situation when questions have arisen over Iran's attitude towards continuing to observe this moratorium.

The fourth meeting is a meeting of the contact group on the peace process in Kosovo. This meeting is also taking place at ministerial level. We have now reached an important stage in the settlement process. Talks have begun on defining the final status of Kosovo. We will follow our position calling for a solution that would be acceptable to both the leaders of Kosovo and to Belgrade. This is not an easy task because the Kosovo Albanian leaders declare openly that they will settle for nothing less than independence. This diverges from the decisions earlier adopted by the United Nations Security Council and we obviously need to ensure that the international community appeals to both sides to negotiate a mutually acceptable solution.

**VLADIMIR PUTIN:** I want to point out that this is an issue of immense importance for us, not only in terms of abiding by the principles of international law, but in terms also of the practical interests of the post-Soviet area. I would like to remind you and your colleagues that all the proposed solutions you come up with through these talks should be universal in nature. This is very important for the post-Soviet area. Regrettably, not all conflicts in the post-Soviet area have been settled yet and we cannot allow ourselves to follow a road that would see one set of principles applied in one case and another set of principles in another. We must always keep in mind the need for a universal foundation to the decisions taken.

**SERGEI LAVROV:** we will most certainly keep this mind, all the more so as during the preliminary work some of our partners in the contact group have been attempting to include in the document the argument that Kosovo is a unique case and does not set a precedent. You can be certain that we will follow your instructions.

**VLADIMIR PUTIN:** It may be a unique case for whoever wants to bypass the general principles of international law, but we have seen this 'uniqueness' in practice over recent years in some parts of the world and we know very well what it leads to.