

**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION****INFORMATION AND PRESS DEPARTMENT**

32/34 Smolenskaya-Sennaya pl., 119200, Moscow G-200; tel.: (095) 244 4119, fax: 244 4112  
e-mail: dip@mid.ru, web-address: www.mid.ru

Unofficial translation from Russian

**PRESS RELEASE****Meeting in London of the Contact Group on Kosovo**

119-01-02-2006

On January 31, a meeting of the Contact Group on Kosovo was held in London at the level of the Foreign Ministers of the Russian Federation, Britain, Germany, Italy, the United States and France with the participation of UN Under-Secretary-General Jean-Marie Guehenno, EU High Representative for European Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana, NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer and also of Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for Kosovo Soren Jessen-Petersen and UN Secretary General's Special Envoy for Kosovo Status Talks Martti Ahtisaari. Ursula Plassnik, the Foreign Minister of Austria, the current EU presiding country, also attended the meeting.

The meeting discussed topical problems in Kosovo settlement in the context of the process of determining the province's future status, launched by the UN Security Council in line with its resolution 1244. It pointed out the principled importance of a direct Belgrade-Pristina dialogue, with the UN Security Council continuing to play a key role, and stressed the need for a search for a compromise by Belgrade and Pristina on the basis of the Contact Group's Guiding Principles and for the elaboration of a truly negotiated solution in the interests of a long-term stabilization of the Balkan region.

Participants in the meeting called for intensified efforts by Pristina regarding the implementation of the standards for national minorities, the ensuring of their security and the return of Serb refugees. The Contact Group is unanimous in the view that on concrete results in these areas, not symbolic gestures by the Kosovo Albanians, the outcome of the status process in Kosovo depends. So far, an impermissible standstill is being observed in respect of the standardization.

There was particularly emphasized on the Russian side the advisability of the observance of multivariant status options, and the inadmissibility of the establishment of a rigid timeframe for the negotiation process.

Sergey Lavrov in his remarks especially stressed that a decision on the status of Kosovo will bear a universal character and pointed to the inadmissibility of the use of double standards in conflict settlement.

February 1, 2006