

**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

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**PRESS RELEASE**

**Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov Meets with Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq Ashraf Jehangir Qazi**

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Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov received on February 16 in Moscow Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, with whom consultations were also held at the Ministry on the full range of settlement-related issues in that country.

There was stated on the Russian side a generally positive assessment of the national elections held in Iraq in December last year. The significant role of the United Nations Organization in their preparation and holding was noted. The sides were unanimous in the view that developments in the situation in Iraq should remain in the sphere of attention of the UN Security Council.

There was affirmed the common point of view regarding the priority aim of a future leadership of Iraq to advance further towards achieving national reconciliation based on due consideration for the interests of all the main ethnic and faith groups and influential political forces by elaborating mutually acceptable compromises. Russia hopes for continuation of the process that began at the inter-Iraqi meeting held in Cairo in November 2005 under the aegis of the League of Arab States on the preparation of a national reconciliation conference.

During the consultations, concern was expressed over the complicated and explosive situation in the country, the continuing bloody terrorist acts and attempts to provoke the further growth of ethnic and faith tension. One of the most important and complex tasks is to ensure law and order and security.

A major condition of the stabilization of Iraq is improvement of the social and economic situation. Russia as a traditional partner of Iraq affirmed its intention to actively participate in its economic reconstruction.

Both sides underscored the importance of an active UN role for the soonest return to normalcy in Iraq.

February 16, 2006