

## 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

**Transcript of Remarks and Replies to Media Questions by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov at Press Conference Following Talks with Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay Reinaldo Gargano, Moscow, February 20, 2006**

229-20-02-2006

**Foreign Minister Lavrov:** Esteemed colleagues,

In the course of our talks with Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uruguay Reinaldo Gargano we stated that the positions of our countries on international issues, as also on issues of regional cooperation, practically coincide in all aspects. We are for strengthening the collective elements in world politics, with the UN playing a central role and with the emphasis laid on multilateral diplomacy, whether with respect to conflict settlement or where the further development of the world trade-and-economic system is concerned. Within the framework of its multivector foreign policy, Russia is actively forging many-sided ties with Latin America, with the countries of the region and with the integration groups which are intensively establishing themselves in this part of the world. In particular, we today discussed in detail the very alluring prospects which are opening up in the context of the development of relations between Russia and MERCOSUR. In addition to the fairly developed political dialogue, we agreed to more actively enlist the business circles of Russia and MERCOSUR in a joint discussion and, hopefully, the practical implementation of important projects primarily in the sphere of infrastructure and in various sectors of the economy.

We also support entrepreneurs' initiative to establish a Russia-MERCOSUR economic forum. The Russian side notes that our bilateral ties with Uruguay play an important role in developing our relations with Latin America. Our trade turnover has been steadily growing. There is interest on both sides in broadening its nomenclature, including that of products from high technology industries. There are good possibilities in the information and communication sphere and in the field of cooperation between scientific institutions of Russia and Uruguay. We also note the growing interest of the two countries' publics in acquaintance with the culture of Russia and, accordingly, of Uruguay. So that I count on our present talks helping to so do that scheduled contacts between the two countries evolve into agreements on specific cooperation projects in the most diverse fields. I also expressed gratitude to my Uruguayan counterpart for the constructive position on Russia's accession to the WTO. The appropriate protocol was signed last month.

**Question:** What possibilities does cooperation with the alternative version of integration, that is with the Bolivarian model of economic development, present for Russia?

**Foreign Minister Lavrov:** I would not like to use any terms to characterize this or other integration model. As I understand, some or other plans which are now being worked out are beginning to be implemented, in particular, within the MERCOSUR framework. This is directed above all towards making maximum use of the natural advantage of the continent's countries in the economic sphere. The aim of these plans is to raise the competitiveness of the region's countries in world trade. Probably that's their full right. We only welcome the prospect that there will be several strong, competitive centers in world trade. Of course, Latin America has all the grounds to become one of such centers. Russia will be keen to cooperate with the countries of the region. This we agreed upon today.

**Question:** What are the results of today's talks with Iran?

**Foreign Minister Lavrov:** The talks with the Iranian delegation are still continuing. It is too early to speak of results. I shall only confirm that we hope that these talks will end with the prospect that this entire situation remains in the IAEA's field of activity. For this to happen, of course, it is important to resume the moratorium on uranium enrichment on Iranian territory and continue contacts involving all the concerned parties in order to develop mutually acceptable agreements in their wake. A very important stage in this work will be the upcoming session of the IAEA Board of Governors to be held in Vienna. The IAEA Director General is to prepare his report by then. I hope very much that it will reflect the fulfillment by Iran of the requests which were addressed to Teheran under IAEA auspices, and state progress in resolving the questions that remain about the past nuclear activities of Iran.

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A video recording of the press conference is posted on the Russian MFA's Web site in the Video section (<http://www.mid.ru>).

February 20, 2006