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Unofficial translation from Russian

Transcript of Remarks and Replies to Media Questions by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov Following Meeting with US President George W. Bush, Washington, March 7, 2006

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Foreign Minister Lavrov: We have just held a very saturated meeting in the White House. US President Bush reconfirmed the accords with Russian President Putin on developing our partnership in all major areas of bilateral cooperation and international politics.

Our energy dialogue is intensively evolving, there are new projects in the sphere of space research, there are agreements to develop the joint initiatives which the two countries' Presidents have put forward in the field of nuclear power and of ensuring its safe and sustained development. We also discussed the prospects for further counter-terrorist cooperation, including the necessity to support the fight against nuclear terrorism with practical steps.

The US President reiterated his firm desire to see that talks with the Russian side on the Russian Federation's accession to the WTO are concluded as soon as possible and assumed personal control of this matter. President Bush reiterated his keenest interest in ensuring by joint efforts success of the G8 summit in St. Petersburg, in which he will take part with President Putin and other leaders of the Group of Eight countries.

We discussed specific moves that Russia and the US could take on a practical plane to enhance the significance and productiveness of the summit in St. Petersburg. I conveyed to President Bush a message from President Putin setting out the main areas of our further contacts for the period ahead. Putin has confirmed that he will be glad to see Mr. Bush in Russia at any time convenient to him.

Question: Please comment on the situation with Hamas.

Foreign Minister Lavrov: I already sufficiently elucidated this theme at the State Department press conference. We affirmed the coordinated position of the Quartet, consisting of Russia, the United States, European Union and UN. President Bush expressed satisfaction with the efforts undertaken in this direction.

Question: Is the Quartet divided on Hamas?

Foreign Minister Lavrov: No, it is not. The Quartet members adhere to the common position on Hamas and it is reflected in the statement of the Quartet. The contacts Russia maintains with Hamas seek to ensure that the movement accepts the Quartet's position.

March 8, 2006