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INFORMATION AND PRESS DEPARTMENT



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Unofficial translation from Russian

Transcript of Remarks and a Reply to a Media Question by Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov at Press Conference of Foreign Ministers of Six States Following Consultations on Iranian Nuclear Program, Berlin, March 30, 2006

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Foreign Minister Lavrov: I would like to say, in addition to the opening comments of our chairman, that we today agreed a Joint Statement, which will be circulated. It sets forth our common position.

It is Russia's belief that the main thing is that we all want to remove the legitimate concerns the international community has about the nuclear program of Iran, by peaceful means, relying upon the professional work of IAEA. Russia considers that there can be no other solution to this problem, and that if we traverse this path, and full cooperation by Iran is necessary for this to happen, then a possibility will open up for Iran to fully enjoy the benefits of peaceful nuclear power.

I also hold that today's meeting was very useful. Hopefully, our further contacts, on which we agreed, will be no less active and will continue to lead us to elaborating our common positions.

Question: US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said that the objective of these consultations was to think of a next move on Iran. Did you discuss sanctions? Are you categorically against their imposition? Don't you think that the regime in Iran is a threat to the world community?

Foreign Minister Lavrov: In principle, Russia does not think that a settlement can be achieved by sanctions. We feel that there ought to be a balanced approach, based on international law and confidence that each member of the world community fulfills its commitments. That's the way we try to act in solving the question of Iran's nuclear program.

The most important thing here is the work of IAEA, which was supported yesterday by the United Nations Security Council. It is aimed at clarifying all the questions related to the past nuclear activities of Iran. IAEA has said that it is not yet able to provide evidences that there are no military aspects in the Iranian nuclear program. But at the same time, the latest IAEA report says the Agency cannot declare that this program has a military focus either.

Therefore, before calling a situation a threat, we need facts, especially in such a region as the Middle East.

We are convinced that in order to impose special measures there must be special facts. In this particular case IAEA can provide facts; so far this has not yet been done.

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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>).

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