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**Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov Answers Media Questions  
Regarding the Iranian Nuclear Problem**

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**Question:** Could you comment on yesterday's statement by Iran concerning uranium enrichment, as well as the visit of Mohamed ElBaradei to Teheran? Does this mean that the IAEA will undertake sanctions against that country or do you consider that this is simply an inspection visit? What is the stand of the Foreign Ministry on this issue?

**Foreign Minister Lavrov:** I would not be in a hurry to draw conclusions, because passions are too often being whipped around Iran's nuclear program. Our task, as I have already said more than once, is to prevent a violation of the regime for the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons. Here for us the main expert is the IAEA. As of now, the Agency has recorded no threats to the nonproliferation regime that would emanate from Iran, although it continues to clarify the questions still outstanding in this connection. That's what the visit of IAEA Director General Mohamed ElBaradei to Teheran, which is starting today, will be dedicated to. His is a scheduled visit. It is not being made in great haste. We support continued and intensified engagement between Iran and the IAEA. We urge Iran to cooperate actively with the Agency. We expect that the results of Mr. ElBaradei's talks in Teheran will help to advance efforts for resolving the Iranian nuclear problem.

**Question:** How far does the probability of a military solution to the Iran problem increase following the declaration of Iran's intention to create a full nuclear cycle process on its soil. What is now the stand of Russia, which has offered a half-hearted offer - to do that together with Russia and on Russian soil? Now Iran has declared a different firm intention. This means a step towards creating conditions for the development of a nuclear weapon.

**Foreign Minister Lavrov:** I would also advise you not to whip up passions, because Iran has never said that it seeks to possess nuclear weapons. On the contrary, Iran has periodically at the highest level given assurances that it has no such plans and that it is going to develop its nuclear industry for peaceful purposes only.

As for the growth of the probability of a military solution to the problem, I am convinced that a military solution to this problem does not exist. Practically all European countries agree with Russia on this point. The Foreign Secretary of Britain and the Foreign Ministers of other European Union countries have repeatedly spoken about this. Even if such plans

exist, and we, naturally, read media reports on that score, they cannot solve this problem. They can only create an additional extremely explosive hotbed in the Middle East - a region where there are already enough such hotbeds. All the participants of the negotiation process, I mean the European trio, Russia, the US and China, have repeatedly, in their joint statements as well, emphasized the necessity of a politico-diplomatic settlement of this problem. This was a few days ago confirmed by US President George W. Bush. That's exactly the point from which we proceed and will in the format I mentioned, as well as within the IAEA and UN, continue to work for a settlement of the Iranian nuclear problem. Our position is well known to Iran. Hopefully it will make a reciprocal step.

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