

**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**



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**Transcript of Remarks and Replies to Media Questions by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov at Joint Press Conference Following Talks with Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Gul, Ankara, May 31, 2006**

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**Foreign Minister Lavrov:** I am indeed very pleased to state that the present talks are being held in the conditions when Russian-Turkish relations following the visit in 2004 of Russian President Vladimir Putin, following the talks that have since taken place between our leaders - including those last autumn in Samsun between President Putin and Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey, following regular contacts between the leaders of the two countries by telephone have reached a qualitatively new level. Today we confirmed this with satisfaction.

Yesterday talks passed very successfully in the framework of a regular meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission on Trade-and-Economic Cooperation. Mr. Turkish Foreign Minister Gul has just mentioned several figures which characterize our economic ties, including the investment of Turkish business circles in the Russian economy. These are mutually advantageous processes. Russian companies are also interested in investment, primarily in the field of energy, including the gas sphere, electric power and nuclear power. We think that the talks held yesterday and today lead to the soonest mutual advantageous implementation of a whole array of new projects.

Today we briefly discussed practically all the main issues that are now on the international agenda and concern states and regions, the countries of the world as a whole. I think that there is not a single one of these questions on which Russia and Turkey would not think identically. On a number of questions, moreover, we not only identically assess the situation, but also act in the same direction.

We consider the emerging multifaceted partnership between Russia and Turkey one of the major factors of stability in the region.

I am certain that the entire range of our relations - bilateral as well as in questions connected with cooperation on the world scene - will be examined during the soon-upcoming visit to Russia of President of Turkey Ahmet Necdet Sezer, and that as a result of this visit our partnership will advance further still.

**Question:** During today's meeting - was concern felt over a likely outcome of the talks on

Iran, including those in the course of tomorrow's meeting in Vienna?

**Foreign Minister Lavrov:** Minister Gul and I stand shoulder to shoulder behind one rostrum, and our views on the possibility of resolving the Iranian nuclear problem are identical.

Indeed, we discussed the situation in detail, and found once more that we concur in assessments. We both hope that, during tomorrow's meeting in Vienna, we shall be able to elaborate proposals opening the way for a negotiated settlement. At this very crucial stage, it's very important that none of the parties one way or another involved in the situation should make abrupt movements and endanger the real prospect of using the chance of reaching an agreement.

**Question:** An important meeting will take place tomorrow. An article in The New York Times says that the United States treats favorably talks and a diplomatic settlement. In this setting, will Russia render support to Iran? Today materials came in from Vienna on the position of the Islamic Republic which note that the US could move to talks on condition that Iran gives up uranium enrichment. For that to happen, Iran demands effective support or guarantees from Russia and China in the UN Security Council.

**Foreign Minister Lavrov:** I would prefer not to comment on press speculations based on leaks, probably, from people who would like to complicate or scuttle the current extremely delicate consultations.

The consultations are being conducted with the main and only aim - to express a common position which would reflect the chief strategic task: of ensuring a nonviolation of the nonproliferation regime while observing and respecting the rights of all NPT member states to peaceful nuclear energy.

Attempts through the press to counterpose the approaches of the participants of the talks in Vienna, I think, do not aid the global work. Those probably undertake them who do not want the talks to succeed.

All six countries - the European trio, Russia, the US and China - are heading to Vienna in order to elaborate a common position. Let us help, not hinder them.

**Question:** What are the prospects for concluding new Russian-Turkish contracts in the energy sphere, in particular for building a second Blue Stream line, as well as a possible Russian participation in the construction of a nuclear power plant on the territory of Turkey?

**Foreign Minister Lavrov:** At the meeting between Russian President Putin and Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan last autumn in Samsun an agreement was reached in principle to develop further the energy partnership. As I have already said, our relevant companies are discussing specific projects, including those that you've mentioned, in the gas sphere, in the electric-power industry and in the field of nuclear power plant construction.

We very much appreciate the fact that at the base of Russian-Turkish energy dialogue and partnership lie the national interests of both countries, the coincidence of these interests, mutual keenness and readiness to consider the interests of each other when ensuring one's

own and the absence of any attempts to politicize this aspect. We very much appreciate such a responsible and comradely approach.

**Question:** How do you assess the announcement of US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice that she is ready for talks with the direct participation of Iran?

**Foreign Minister Lavrov:** I did not see the announcement. Tomorrow the European trio, Russia, the US and China are meeting in Vienna in order to prepare proposals on talks with Iran.

I want to add that a good opportunity does not appear by itself. It appears as a result of very painstaking work. If these painstaking efforts cease, the opportunity may as easily disappear as it appeared. Therefore it is extremely important for all the participants of the six-nation meeting to seek continuous movement forward.

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