



Remarks With Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov

Secretary Condoleezza Rice

Osobnyak
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FOREIGN MINISTER LAVROV: (in Russian) Dear colleagues, it's been a pleasure for me to meet Ms. Rice, State Secretary of the U.S. today. We've discussed the process of fulfillment of our previous arrangements achieved between our two presidents and also the preparations for their new meetings during this celebration of the 60th anniversary of our victory. And we've arranged to control in a more active way the fulfillment of all other arrangements. And certainly, we've discussed the full Russia-U.S. agenda, including our cooperation within the framework of the Russia-NATO Council within the OSCE and within the framework of other regional problems and conflicts. And the conclusion I can make is that despite the differences we might have in terms of some aspects of certain situations, we still have a solid base for our cooperation with the fulfillment of the agreements and arrangements achieved between our two presidents and both Russia and the U.S. are decisively ready to fulfill those. Thank you.



SECRETARY RICE: Well, thank you very much Minister Lavrov, Sergei. We have, indeed, had a very constructive and far-ranging discussion of U.S.-Russian relations. I think that we have prepared well the way forward for the presidents to meet here in Moscow during the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II.

We also had a chance to discuss certain regional issues of interest, in particular, the Minister and I are both principals of the Quartet that supports the Road Map on Middle East Peace and we had an extensive discussion of our responsibilities to keep that process moving forward at a time when we believe there is great hope for progress between the Palestinians and the Israelis.

And finally, I had an opportunity to affirm for Foreign Minister Lavrov the interest that the United States has in a strong and confident Russia that is playing a constructive role in international politics, that is developing in terms of its own democratic development and in terms of the development of rule of law in the political and the economic spheres.

And finally, we have enjoyed our meeting so much that we will see each other very shortly in Vilnius for the NATO-Russia Council.

FOREIGN MINISTER LAVROV: (in Russian) It will be tomorrow already.

SECRETARY RICE: Yes.

QUESTION: (in Russian) I had two questions here -- one for Ms. Rice. Yesterday, when you said that you have information that in Russia there is no independence of media, especially in internet media. I'm wondering where this information comes from because it's absolutely untrue.

And the second question is to Mr. Lavrov, I know that on several occasions you've provided a compilation of information on mass media in Russia to the U.S. side and so these compilation proves that those ideas suggested by the U.S. are not quite true. So, I'm wondering whether you've discussed this issue today and what was the reaction of the U.S. side to this?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, we continue to have discussions about an independent media and about media's willingness and ability to speak openly and critically about anything that they wish to do. I don't think that I said that the internet media was a problem. I think the issue has been national electronic media of television. I've also made the point that there are many, many newspapers. But the United States is not the only one concerned about the role of and the possibility for independent media in Russia.

FOREIGN MINISTER LAVROV: (in Russian) Well, certainly as Dr. Rice has said already, we did discuss those topics and I do not see anything unusual about this because we have a broad discussion with the U.S. on a whole range of issues and there are no closed subjects in these discussions. And if anything is concerned -- of concern to the other side, we are ready to discuss this based on concrete examples and we've already said also that there shouldn't be any general expression of concerns about the absence of a free mass media in Russia because it is actually very difficult to work on this. We need concrete examples to work on in these regards and on any other issues, as well.

QUESTION: George Gedda, AP. This first question is for Secretary Rice. Madam Secretary, you described Russia as a strategic partner (inaudible) Venezuela (inaudible). Mr. Lavrov, do you see it as appropriate for the United States to include this is the U.S.-Russia dialogue?

SECRETARY RICE: We have made very clear to the Russian Government our concerns about certain arms sales, in particular, in Latin America and to Venezuela having to do with issues of stability in Venezuela. But again, I will just underscore what the minister said. There are no subjects that are, so to speak, off the table. When we get together, we talk about everything of concern to us. And we will continue to raise our concerns about arms sales when we have them.

FOREIGN MINISTER LAVROV: (in Russian) Well, I will simply that our military cooperation with Venezuela and with other countries do not contradict any obligations we've assumed internationally.

And as to the second question, I would say that like the U.S. is interested in a strong and a democratic Russia that could play its active role internationally, we are also interested that the U.S. should be a strong and democratic partner and country playing an active role internationally.

And I am also convinced that the U.S. and other countries are interested in stable international relations and we're sure that all those countries will try to achieve those goals, based on the international law. And moreover I would say that on the whole range of issues, our issues of the U.S. and of Russia, in our foreign policy do coincide. These regards: the fight against international terrorism, the prevention of the proliferation of mass destruction weapons

and the settlement of regional conflicts. And I'm sure that we all are interested in stable and democratic development of all states all over the world.

Thank you.

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