



## Remarks With Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov

### Secretary Condoleezza Rice

Moscow, Russia  
May 15, 2007

(English-language portions only)

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, thank you very much, Sergey, for hosting me here and I would also like to thank President Putin for meeting with me earlier. Sergey has given a very extensive list of these things that we have discussed and indeed, it's a sign of the many areas of cooperation which we enjoy and the work that we have been doing to prepare high-level contacts that will proceed from this meeting including, of course, the meeting of the presidents that will take place shortly at the margins of the G8.



We also have established, of course, another high-level mechanism, the 2+2 which will bring together Sergey and the Defense Minister on the Russian side and I will be there with Bob Gates. We would hope to have a meeting of that sometime perhaps in the early fall, because the real outcome of today's discussions was that we agreed that we need to intensify our consultations, our dialogue to minimize misunderstandings, to be able to build on the areas of cooperation in which we are working.

I think the presidents, as Sergey said, have a particularly strong record on global terrorism, on issues of nonproliferation, and indeed on civil nuclear energy, peaceful development of nuclear energy which is an area that I think they will leave quite a legacy to the world from the work that they are doing.

We have had areas in which our policies do not coincide and given the complexities of our relationship, that will continue, but I think we have agreed here that when we find those areas, that is reason to intensify our dialogue and intensify our discussion, to look for areas of agreement. I was also very interested in discussing the upcoming transitions that will take place in Russia, the upcoming political events, elections, and the like. I'm always very interested in talking about domestic developments here and doing so in a spirit of mutual respect and I would hope that Russia's transition to a more democratic and pluralistic political system will, in fact, intensify.

But it's been a very good set of meetings. I very much appreciate the opportunity to be here and I look forward to our dinner tonight, at which we will continue our discussions.

**FOREIGN MINISTER LAVROV:** (In Russian.)

**QUESTION:** Arshad Mohammed from Reuters. Foreign Minister Lavrov, can you explain to us what underlies the relatively harsh rhetoric that we heard from Russia toward the United States these past few months?

And Secretary Rice, you and Secretary Gates have repeatedly said that you wish to try to address the Russian concern about the possibility of a breakout scenario with the European missile defense plans. Why not give the Russians an explicit commitment that you will not expand the system beyond a certain point and try to address their concerns that way? Or do you feel that doing that would tie your hands unduly?

**FOREIGN MINISTER LAVROV:** Well, Arshad, (in Russian).

**QUESTION:** Second question --

**SECRETARY RICE:** Yes, on the question of the future evolution of a missile defense system, I think it's really important to realize that this is a system that would not even be deployed for a number of years even in modest numbers. And it is extremely important that we think about, and think together, about the threats that we'll face in the 21st century. The threats are different than they were in the 20th century and they are different than the time when the Soviet Union and the United States were hostile to one another. And so the discussions that we have, I think will explain what we have in mind, why we believe that it is necessary to the defense of the United States and, indeed, why it is a good complement to the security of our allies in Europe. And we are also very pleased to talk about what we (inaudible) the future and how this might evolve.

But it's extremely important to recognize that we are talking about something that is a future development and it's one reason that it's important to get it started. But I do think that when there's contacts of -- the many high-level contacts that we plan to have now, particularly when the defense ministers and foreign ministers are together, that that gives us an opportunity to explore. We also have military-to-military contacts that can be used for the same purpose.

**FOREIGN MINISTER LAVROV:** (In Russian.)

**SECRETARY RICE:** I can't comment on (inaudible). I hope it goes well. We have been very supportive of and in fact want to see good relations between the European Union and Russia. It helps in many of the international circumstances, international difficulties in which we find ourselves. For instance, we have very good cooperation in the Quartet, which is the United States, UN, European Union and Russia. So when relations between the European Union and Russia are good, it makes the solution of problems in the world somewhat easier and so we're supportive of that. But I can't comment on either internal matters of the European Union or tomorrow except to say I will watch and hope that it goes well for both sides.

**QUESTION:** David Holley with L.A. Times. The U.S. and Russia obviously haven't agreed on the U.S. missile defense proposal, so have you agreed to disagree on this? How much of a threat does that issue still pose to the relationship and what in practical terms can you do to prevent that kind of issue from undermining your relationship during the coming political campaigns, for both secretaries.

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, of course, Russia and the United States do not completely see eye to eye on the current plans for missile defense deployments, although we are continuing to talk about it. It is still quite a long time until such deployments would come into being and we very much value the opportunity to discuss the issue with Russia and to talk about the emerging threats.

Ultimately, we may see those threats differently and what needs to be done about them, but I would not use the same word to describe what it means for the relationship. I think to say that it's a threat to the relationship that we may have a disagreement about an issue like this is to overstate the case. And if indeed what we want to do is to prevent misunderstandings that somehow become larger than they should, then we have agreed to intensify our dialogue and our consultation and to have more regularized consultations in order to share information about the threat and to share information about responses to those threats.

That's why I very much think that the 2+2 format will be a good one. It is one that we have employed with other states. For instance, we have a 2+2 with Japan that is very useful in seeing future problems and addressing them before they become more major problems. And I think that this is a good way for Russia and the United States to do precisely that.

**FOREIGN MINISTER LAVROV:** (In Russian.)

**QUESTION:** (Inaudible) of Russia Today Television. (Inaudible).

You talked about finding - minimizing the areas of misunderstanding. Did you manage to find such an area on minimizing misunderstanding on the status of Kosovo and what will happen if Russia uses its right of veto as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council on the current resolution? Thank you.

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, we did discuss at some length Kosovo. Again, we see the situation differently. We - the United States believes that the Ahtisaari plan provides a good basis on which to move forward, that the resolution which was introduced by France is a good start for how the international community might move forward on the issue of status for Kosovo.

We are engaging with members of the Security Council, permanent members like Russia but also nonpermanent members, to try to find common ground in order to be able to move forward. I'm not going to get into speculation about what will happen here or there with this or that decision.

I want to say one word about Serbia in this. The United States has been a strong supporter of Serbia's European horizon. The effort that we believe will be very much worth it for Serbia to be integrated into Europe. It is why we were supportive of Partnership for Peace within NATO for Serbia. And we hope that Serbia and Kosovo can put their past behind them and move forward on the future. I know that we and Russia do not have agreement on this, but we'll keep working and see if we can find a resolution. I can't see a ready solution, but we need to keep working toward it.

**FOREIGN MINISTER LAVROV:** (In Russian.)

2007/T7-4

Released on May 15, 2007

 [BACK TO TOP](#)

Published by the U.S. Department of State Website at <http://www.state.gov> maintained by the Bureau of Public Affairs.