



**Introduction from
Sergey Lavrov,
Minister for Foreign
Affairs of the
Russian Federation**

The forthcoming visit of British Prime Minister David Cameron to Moscow this autumn is a good opportunity to review the current state of our political dialogue and areas of practical cooperation. We value multidimensional interaction between Russia and Great Britain in the UN Security Council, G8, G20 and other multilateral fora. This interaction is indispensable for international stability, including Euro-Atlantic region where the need for an open cooperative architecture of indivisible security without dividing lines becomes more and more obvious.

Within the context of an evolving, multipolar, more democratic and fair world system, based on the rule of international law, we cannot afford to be guided by politicised and stereotyped approaches inherited from a different era.

The visit of Prime Minister Cameron comes at an opportune time. More and more people, including politicians, understand that ideological obsessions must give way to pragmatism and the search for balance of interests, both internationally and in bilateral relations of states, in spite of the fact that governments might differ on certain matters. Key national interests of Russia and Britain are not contradictory. This is why we believe that the Moscow summit will provide further impetus to the mutual efforts to take our relationship to a new level.

This expectation is based on the results we managed to achieve lately in restoring the atmosphere of mutual trust and respect.

We are witnessing a dynamic development of political dialogue based upon willingness to listen to and hear each other that underlie the relations between President Medvedev and Prime Minister Cameron. During their meetings in the margins of G8 and G20 Summits in Canada, Republic of Korea and France they could understand each other perfectly well and agreed to work together to strengthen the Russo-British relationship

for the benefit of the two countries and that of the rest of the world.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Foreign Office are following the guidelines set by the two leaders. The dialogue aimed at achieving common goals is held at various levels. We have exchanged quite productive visits with Secretary Hague, and our respective departments and experts have developed useful working contacts.

An important component of our bilateral relationship is the interparliamentary dialogue which became livelier. The Russian Federal Assembly and the British Parliament are in touch with each other on a range of issues in different formats. Apart from the interaction in the multilateral bodies, such as Parliamentary Assemblies of the Council of Europe and OSCE, there are regular bilateral meetings, including between the relevant parliamentary committees. The Chairman of the upper Chamber of the Russian parliament visited Great Britain last March, and further parliamentary exchanges between London and Moscow are being planned.


The cooperation between various departments of the two governments further enriches the fabric of the bilateral agenda. The Ministries of Education work hard on an intergovernmental agreement on adoption. The Federal Drug Control Service of Russia and the Britain's SOCA have conducted several joint operations against drug trafficking. The interaction between Ministries of Justice is also evolving in a constructive fashion. Those are just a few examples.

Most importantly, our relations have a firm and solid economic foundation. In fact, trade and economic cooperation between Russia and the UK has been progressing over many years irrespective of political currents and differences in some other areas. Our bilateral trade in the first half of the year more than doubled and almost caught up with the level preceding the global recession. The UK is also one our top investment partners.

Prime Minister Cameron will bring with him to Moscow an impressive group of Britain's business leaders. Many of them already have entered the Russian market or intend to do so to take advantage of its huge demand, as well as human and natural resources.

There are plenty of opportunities. Russia is working hard on diversifying its economy, introducing innovative approaches to growth based on modernisation and high-tech industries, and creating better conditions for mutually beneficial investments. Our priorities are very much like those of Britain as regards meeting the challenges of the current difficult situation on the global markets. The two governments have identified six areas of bilateral cooperation

that deserve special attention and support. Those are energy and energy efficiency, financial services, including plans for the Moscow Financial Centre, high-tech and nanotechnologies, small and medium businesses, overall business environment and Olympic legacy.

When speaking about our ties, I cannot help mentioning that Russian culture is popular in Britain and the same can be said about British literature, drama, music and film in Russia. We hope that a series of high profile cultural events planned for the coming year would meet keen interest of the sophisticated British public and foster mutual understanding between our peoples and nations. 

The key national interests of Russia and Britain are not contradictory

Foreign Secretary William Hague meeting Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in London, 15 February 2011



Photo: FCO