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Lavrov Says Iran Nuclear Deal Could Be Reached by July

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Russia's Presidenr Vladimir Putin (R) and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani in Kremlin.

Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Wednesday that there had been progress in world powers' talks with Iran on its nuclear program and there were grounds to believe an agreement could be reached by an end-June deadline.

The talks last year between Iran and the six powers — Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and the United States — were extended until the end of June after failing to produce a breakthrough to end the long-running dispute over the program.

A previous deadline had been set for last November to curb Tehran's sensitive nuclear activities in exchange for gradually lifting sanctions against Iran.

"There is progress. We have grounds to believe that we will move forward within the parameters which were agreed upon in November and assume a resolution to the Iranian nuclear problem by the end of June 2015," Lavrov told a news conference.

Iran rejects allegations by the United States and its allies that it is using its nuclear program to develop the capability to produce atomic weapons but has refused to halt uranium enrichment.

Tehran has been hit with U.S., European Union and UN Security Council sanctions as a result.

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