



**Russian Chronology:  
January-March 2004**

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**April 2004**



# Russian Domestic Policy: A Chronology

## January-March 2004

**1 January 2004** The following candidates have been nominated for the presidential election.

Irina Khakamada  
 Vladimir Bryntsalov  
 Ivan Rybkin  
 Sergey Glaz'yev  
 Anzori Aksentyev (Kikalishvili)  
 Nikolay Kharitonov  
 Oleg Malyshkin  
 Viktor Gerashchenko

**1 January 2004** Passports of the former USSR cease to be valid in Russia. Citizens who have not obtained the new-style document will not be able to undertake any legal transaction, to buy train or airline tickets or receive pension payments. The only exception is for a number of foreign citizens and stateless persons, namely citizens of former Soviet republics who have come to Russia and been registered at their place of residence or who have received temporary residence permits. For them the validity of the old Soviet passport will run to 1 January 2006.

**1 January 2004** The federal law "On alternative civilian service" comes into force. The draft law was completed in the summer of 2002. The Duma adopted it on 28 June 2003, the Federation Council approved it on 10 July 2003 and Vladimir Putin signed it into law on 25 July 2003.

**1 January 2004** Chechnya's rebel foreign minister, Ilyas Akhmadov, is interviewed in *The Chechen Times*. He says that Chechnya is ready for peace talks with Russia if Vladimir Putin agrees to solve the conflict taking into account the legitimate interests of both sides.

**2 January 2004** Vladimir Putin issues a decree appointing the first deputy minister of internal affairs and head of the Criminal Police Service, Rashid Nurgaliyev, as acting minister of internal affairs.

**2 January 2004** The *Daymohk* website reports that rebel Chechen President Aslan Maskhadov was slightly wounded when a unit of the presidential guard was fighting Russian occupation forces in Nozhay-Yurtovskiy District.

**4 January 2004** The Russian Party of Life nominates its leader and Federation Council speaker Sergey Mironov as a presidential candidate.

**4 January 2004** An article in *Kommersant Vlast* says that Russian-US "strategic partnership" is becoming nothing more than a "covert form of rivalry".

**5 January 2004** Nikolay Kharitonov is registered as the official Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF) candidate in the 2004 Russian presidential election. The Central Electoral Commission (CEC) also registers three separate groups of voters in support of Irina Khakamada, one of the leaders of the URF; Sergey Glazyev, one of the leaders of Rodina; and Anzori Aksentyev, a businessman, as Russian presidential candidates. All three will now have to collect 2m signatures to support them before they can proceed.

**5 January 2004** Prime-TASS reports that the extraction of oil in Russia in 2003 came to 412.377m tonnes, while in 2002 the figure was 380m tonnes. According to Energy minister Igor Yusufov, in 2004 Russia is expected to extract 432m tonnes of oil and refine 192m tonnes, extract 275m tonnes of coal and 624.1bn cubic metres of gas, and produce 936bn kilowatt hours of electricity.

**5 January 2004** It is claimed that Ruslan Gelayev, the head of one of the largest Chechen armed gangs, has been killed in the hills of Dagestan during the military operation to destroy the gang that broke through into Tsuntinskiy District on 15 December 2003. Deputy Prosecutor-General Sergey Fridinskiy says he cannot confirm media reports of Gelayev's death.

**6 January 2004** Aleksandr Sharavin, director of the Political and Military Analysis Institute, is interviewed in *Komsomolskaya Pravda* on Russian military reform and Russo-Chinese relations.

**6 January 2004** A Rodina Duma deputy condemns the fact that all Duma committees are likely to be headed by Yedinaya Rossiya deputies.

**6 January 2004** *The Caucasus Times* website cites a relative of the Chechen field commander Ruslan Gelayev as denying reports that Gelayev was killed in December.

**6 January 2004** The commander of the Russian Strategic Missile Troops, Gen-Col Nikolay Solovtsov, says that there is no short-term alternative to nuclear weapons.

**7 January 2004** Vladimir Putin visits the Savvino-Storozhevskiy Monastery in the Moscow region. He states: "Orthodoxy is part of our culture, and one should not draw any kind of clear-cut line between culture and the church. In this country, of course, by law there is a separation of church and state. But in our hearts, and in the history of our people, everything is together - it was always thus and always will be."

**8 January 2004** Alu Alkhanov, Chechen Interior Minister, states that 543 crimes associated with terrorism were carried out in Chechnya in 2003 and 351 acts of terrorism were carried out in Chechnya.

**8 January 2004** All the main government ministers outline the main tasks for their ministries in 2004 on <http://www.government.gov.ru/>.

**9 January 2004** Pulkovo airport in St Petersburg closes for flights from China until further notice because of the SARS cases in China. SARS precautions are also stepped up in Khabarovsk.

**9 January 2004** Sergey Ivanov says the MOD's budget for 2004 amounts to R389 billion.

**9 January 2004** Chechen envoy Akhmed Zakayev criticises the West for linking Chechnya with international terrorism.

Chechen commander Shamil Basayev says that Chechen insurgents will immediately stop acts of sabotage if Vladimir Putin officially declares his adherence to international law in the settlement of the Chechen conflict.

**12 January 2004** Vladimir Putin addresses the presidential anti-corruption council, which meets for the first time.

Putin says the task of doubling Russian GDP in 10 years is "achievable".

Putin has dismissed Yevgeniy Lisov from the post of deputy head of the presidential administration and head of the Main Monitoring Directorate of the Russian president. He appoints Valeriy Nazarov deputy head of the presidential administration and head of the Main Monitoring Directorate.

**12 January 2004** The Moscow City Court hands down life sentences to two men directly involved in the blowing up of blocks of flats in Moscow and Volgodonsk in September 1999. Adam Dekkushev and Yusuf Krymshamkhalov are convicted of terrorism, murder with particular cruelty, membership of illegal armed formations, possession and transport of explosives, attempted murder and illegal crossing of the border. Human rights campaigner Sergey Kovalev considers them to be scapegoats.

The Federal Security Service (FSB) says the case involving explosions at apartment blocks in 1999 cannot be regarded as cleared up while the mastermind of the bombings Achimez Gochiyayev is still at large.

**12 January 2004** Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov speaks out in support of Yukos. He is interviewed in *Vedomosti*.

**12 January 2004** The press secretary of the Chechen State Council Said Dibiyeu states that all Chechen refugees still living in tent camps in Ingushetia will be resettled by 1 March.

**12 January 2004** The deputy chief of the Railway Troops, Lt-Gen Vyacheslav Buryy, says a joint commission on the introduction of the Railway Troops into the

Defence Ministry will be set up on 15 January. The Railway Troops have 54,000 personnel.

**12 January 2004** Deputy Prime Minister Boris Aleshin says the Russian government plans to draft a concept for establishing a single national aircraft maker before the end of January.

**13 January 2004** Yedinaya Rossiya decides to take control (ie the chairmanship) of all Duma committees. There are 29 committees.

**13 January 2004** General secretary of the Russian Union of Journalists Igor Yakovenko is in favour of retaining the media law passed in 1991. He is worried about the new media law which is yet to be passed.

**13 January 2004** Huseyn Isayev, chairman of the Chechen State Council, say the parliamentary elections in the Chechen Republic will be held in October or November 2004.

**14 January 2004** Rodina bloc leader Sergey Glaz'yev forecasts that the bloc will become a single political party before the end of 2004. He warns that the CPRF may self-destruct.

**14 January 2004** The commander of the Combined Force in the North Caucasus, Col-Gen Valeriy Baranov, is interviewed in *Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kur'yer*. He says there are no large rebel groups under unified command left in Chechnya and the total number of gunmen is about 1,200 people.

The president of Chechnya Akhmat Kadyrov sets off on an official visit to Saudi Arabia.

**14 January 2004** Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov tells a meeting of Siberian military commissars in Krasnoyarsk that more needs to be done to improve the quality of recruits to the armed forces.

Russian air force Commander-in-Chief Vladimir Mikhaylov says the MOD is working to create an aerospace defence system. The commander-in-chief of Russia's air forces, Vladimir Mikhaylov, says Russia's long-range strategic bombers are expected to undertake flight exercises over the Atlantic Ocean in 2004.

**14 January 2004** The chairman of Russia's Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Yevgeniy Primakov, says Russia's present rate of economic growth is not sufficient to achieve the target of doubling GDP by 2010.

**14 January 2004** Irina Khakamada accuses Vladimir Putin of lying over the use of gas in the October 2002 Dubrovka theatre siege, in an open letter in *Kommersant*.

**15 January 2004** The Russian government supports the idea of creating a system of personal registration for the population. It will come into operation in two years' time.

**15 January 2004** The Moscow City Court starts hearing an appeal from defence lawyers of former Yukos president Mikhail Khodorkovskiy against extending his custodial arrest for another three months. The court rules that Khodorkovskiy is to remain in custody.

The MVD says two Yukos oil company shareholders, Leonid Nevzlin and Vladimir Dubov, who are currently abroad, have been put on the wanted list and charged in absentia.

**15 January 2004** Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says most of the R148bn allocated for the state defence order in 2004 will be used for creating new weapons and military equipment. He says he is concerned about the lack of modern armaments in the armed forces.

**16 January 2004** Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov addresses the opening session of the new Duma.

The Duma elects the chairmen of all 29 Duma committees. Members of the Yedinaya Rossiya faction will be at the head of all these committees.

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Chairman</b>
Budget & Taxes	Yuriy Vasilyev
Security	Vladimir Vasilyev
International Affairs	Konstantin Kosachev
State Construction	Vladimir Pligin
Legislation	Pavel Krashenninnikov
Labour, Social Policy	Andrey Isayev
Defence	Viktor Zavarzin
Health	Tatyana Yakovleva
Education & Science	Nikolay Bulayev
Women's Affairs, Family & Youth	Yekaterina Lakhova
Economic Policy & Business	Valeriy Draganov
Property	Viktor Pleskacheskiy
Agrarian Issues	Gennadiy Kulik
Industry, Construction & High Technology	Martin Shakkum
Ecology	Vladimir Grachev (previously held this post)
Natural Resources	Natalya Komarova
CIS Affairs & Relations with Compatriots	Andrey Kokoshin (previously held this post)
Nationalities	Yevgeniy Trofimov
Federation Affairs & Regional Policy	Viktor Grishin (previously held this post)
Local Self-government	Vladimir Mokryy (previously held this post)
Public Associations & Religious Organizations	Sergey Popov
Standing Orders & the Organization of	

Work of the State Duma  
 Information Policy  
 Credit Organizations & Financial Markets  
 Power Engineering, Transport &  
 Communication  
 Culture  
 North & the Far East  
 Healthcare & Sport  
 Veterans

Oleg Kovalev  
 Valeriy Komissarov  
 Vladimir Reznik

Valeriy Yazev  
 Iosif Kobzon  
 Valentina Pivnenko  
 Vladimir Goryunov  
 Nikolay Kovalev

**16 January 2004** The MVD says that Chechen rebel leader Ruslan Gelayev may have been severely wounded in clashes with border guards, policemen and commandos in Dagestan's Tsuntinskiy District at the end of December.

**16 January 2004** The political council of the Party for the Rebirth of Russia, which is headed by Gennadiy Seleznev, decides to support Vladimir Putin at the forthcoming presidential elections.

**17 January 2004** Chechen President Akhmat Kadyrov visits Saudi Arabia,

**19 January 2004** Chechen President Akhmat Kadyrov says Vladimir Putin should be president for life. The chairman of the State Duma Committee on Legislation, Pavel Krasheninnikov, opposes any such amendment of the constitution.

Kadyrov says he is planning to "push forward" talks on the conclusion of a treaty on the delimitation of powers between Chechnya and Russia.

**19 January 2004** The Committee-2008 for Free Elections begins working in Moscow. It is working to ensure that there will be free elections in Russia in 2008 and beyond. Their main aim is to prevent the re-election of Vladimir Putin for a third term or his nominee coming to power. Sergey Parkhomenko, one of the founders states: "There are serious worries that the next elections, due to be held this year, 2004, may well turn out to be the last, simply because it will turn out that future elections are redundant, it will turn out that, actually, there is no need to waste money on this."

**19 January 2004** Valeriy Yazev, chairman of the Duma's energy, transport and communications committee, says Russia's natural gas exports in 2003 are estimated to have amounted to 130bn cu.m., worth about 16bn dollars.

**20 January 2004** Liberal Democratic Party leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy proposes making the presidential term without a time limit. Independent Duma Deputy Vladimir Ryzhkov rejects this idea, as do the leaderships of Yedinaya Rossiya and Rodina.

**20 January 2004** The first deputy head of the Russian Interior Ministry's anti-organized crime department, Yuriy Demidov, says more than 560 terrorist attacks were reported in Russia in 2003, 55% more than in 2002. 86 such crimes had been solved.

Deputy Secretary of the Security Council Valentin Stepankov says organized crime in Russia remains on an upward trend. He says the number of crimes carried out to order by organized crime groups and societies increased eight-fold between 1999 and 2003, from 3,300 to 26,000.

**20 January 2004** Aleksey Gordeyev, deputy prime minister, and agriculture minister says Russia will export 5m tonnes of grain in 2004.

**21 January 2004** Vladimir Putin signs a decree reshuffling personnel in the country's Security Council. The president dismisses former speaker of the Duma Gennadiy Seleznev as a Security Council member and confirms the membership of Boris Gryzlov, who was recently elected Duma speaker.

**21 January 2004** Deputy interior minister police Col-Gen Aleksandr Chekalin says the Interior Ministry (MVD) has set about developing new foreign passports containing biometric data.

**21 January 2004** Goskomstat states that the rate of growth of industrial output in Russia in 2003 increased to 7% from 3.7% in 2002.

**21 January 2004** Vladimir Putin signs a decree releasing Abdul-Khakim Sultygov from the duties of Russian Federation special presidential representative for upholding human and civic rights and freedoms in Chechnya, in connection with the election of the Chechen Republic president. This work will now be handled by the Chechen leadership and the presidential human rights commission.

**21 January 2004** *Argumenty i Fakty* profiles the new head of the Main Monitoring Directorate Valeriy Nazarov.

**21 January 2004** The Prosecutor-General's Office issues an international arrest warrant for one of the former bosses of the Yukos oil company, Leonid Nevzlin.

**21 January 2004** The commander-in-chief of the Russian Black Sea Fleet, Adm Vladimir Masorin, is interviewed in *Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kur'yer*. He says Sevastopol will remain the Russian Black Sea Fleet's main base for at least 13 years.

**22 January 2004** The leader of the CPRF, Gennadiy Zyuganov, criticises the leader of Rodina, Sergey Glaz'yev, for careerism.

**22 January 2004** The CEC is refusing to register Viktor Gerashchenko as Rodina's presidential candidate. It says he must collect 2 million signatures to be accepted as a candidate.

Sergey Glaz'yev says that Rodina will become a unified political organization and political party. The Rodina bloc currently includes three parties: the Russian Regions Party, headed by Glaz'yev and Dmitriy Rogozin; the People's Will Party,

headed by Sergey Baburin; and the Unified Socialist Party of Russia, headed by Yelena Mukhina.

**22 January 2004** The Audit Chamber reports that the MOD misused 488.2m dollars allocated to it in 2003. The budget resources were not misappropriated, but misused or used ineffectively.

**23 January 2004** Boris Berezovskiy says he will not finance the presidential campaign of Irina Khakamada. He says he will finance the campaign of Ivan Rybkin.

**23 January 2004** Federation Council chairman Sergey Mironov denies that he is a Kremlin candidate for the presidential elections.

**23 January 2004** The National Central Bureau of Interpol in the Russian Federation confirms to Interfax that the co-owners of the Yukos oil company, Leonid Nevzlin and Vladimir Dubov, have been put on the international wanted list.

**23 January 2004** The department of the Justice Ministry in the constituent republic of Yakutia rules to seize a 50% stake in Lenaneftegaz, a subsidiary of Yukos.

**23 January 2004** Forces of the Chechen Interior Ministry state they have detained the so-called Emir of the Wahhabi Jamaat.

**23 January 2004** The Duma charges the Duma committees on defence and security to forward inquiries to the MOD and the FSB in connection with mass pneumonia cases among servicemen.

**24 January 2004** The URF congress takes place. The congress accepts the resignation of the party's co-chairmen. Boris Nemtsov, Irina Khakamada, Yegor Gaydar and Anatoliy Chubays will from now on be rank-and-file members of the party. The institution of co-chairman was deemed to be ineffective, and in future just one person will lead the party.

**24 January 2004** Sergey Glaz'ev issues a statement saying that the statement by the co-chairman of the supreme council of Rodina, Dmitriy Rogozin, that the leadership of the bloc did not take any decision to support the independent nomination of the leader of the Rodina faction in the Duma, Glaz'ev, for the presidency does not correspond to the facts.

**24 January 2004** Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov speaks at a conference on problems of modern systems of military command at the Academy of Military Sciences. He says that Russia's armed forces must be ready for any kind of armed conflict. "We must acknowledge that military science has not yet come up with a precise generalization of modern warfare and armed conflicts. This means the Russian armed forces and high military command structures must be ready for any

kind of armed conflict ... on this basis we need to answer the question: how can we make our military command system as flexible as possible and capable of reacting to any military threat to Russia that could arise in the modern world?" He notes that Vladimir Putin signed order No 1058 on 10 September 2003. In accordance with this the Defence Ministry, in the form of the General Staff, is responsible for coordinating the actions of all security structures with a military component. He goes on to define the roles of the MOD and General Staff. Effective military command is provided by the Defence Ministry as the supreme body of military command and the General Staff as a Defence Ministry structure responsible for strategic planning and troop command in wartime. Under the statute "On the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces", this structure "is a central body of military command and the main body of operational command for the Russian armed forces, which coordinates the activities of the Border Troops and Federal Security Service agencies, the Interior Ministry's Internal Troops, the Railway Troops, the Federal Agency of Government Communications and Information, the civil defence troops, the Russian Federation's military engineer and road construction forces, the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service, the federal agencies of state protection, and the federal agency for the mobilization readiness of bodies of state power, to carry out tasks in the field of defence and the construction and development of other troops, military forces and bodies, as well as the planning and use of the armed forces and other troops, military forces and bodies in the field of defence."

He says the role of the General Staff needs strengthening. "It is clear that, first and foremost, the Main Operational Department, the Main Organizational and Mobilization Department and the Main Intelligence Department need to be strengthened. The General Staff can only be 'the army's brain' if the work of these intellectual components is raised to a completely new level. The General Staff develops key solutions to state military security issues and the building and development of the armed forces. It also has to engage in implementing these and monitoring concrete events across a wide range of current activity."

Sergey Ivanov says the Russian armed forces should not rely too much on the experience gained from the anti-guerrilla operation in Chechnya in analysing possible military conflicts in the future.

**24 January 2004** Yabloko says it will not put up a candidate for the presidential elections. It issues a statement on this in *Novaya Gazeta*.

**25 January 2004** The Prosecutor-General's Office has filed an international extradition request for Leonid Nevzlin and Vladimir Dubov, senior shareholders in Yukos. Nevzlin and Dubov are in Israel.

**25 January 2004** A URF member calls for an end for dialogue with the Putin leadership.

**26 January 2004** The chairman of the all-Russia movement For Human Rights, Lev Ponomarev, calls for a boycott of the presidential election.

**26 January 2004** Minister for Chechen Affairs Stanislav Ilyasov meets in Moscow with UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Jan Egeland. Ilyasov

says that 49,000 refugees from Chechnya are currently living in Ingushetia in tents, private accommodation and temporary shelter. About half of them - 25,000 - do not intend returning home. About 5,000 displaced persons from Chechnya are currently living in three tent camps.

**26 January 2004** Ella Pamfilova, chair of the Presidential Commission on Human Rights, says the post of presidential human rights envoy for Chechnya should not have been abolished before the parliamentary election in the republic.

**26 January 2004** Andrey Belyaninov, the general director of Rosoboroneksport, says Russia's weapons and military equipment exports rose 21.4% on the year in 2003 to 5.1bn US dollars. In 2001, the figure amounted to 3.2bn dollars. Rosoboroneksport's exports accounted for approximately 94% of Russia's total weapons and military equipment exports in 2003. Russia supplied weapons and military equipment to 52 countries in 2003, India and China being the major buyers. Belyaninov said that in 2003 the majority of Russia's military export was of navy and air defence equipment.

**26 January 2004** An article on the *strana.ru* website discusses the rivalry between the MOD and General Staff.

**26 January 2004** Rodina leaders Dmitry Rogozin and Sergey Glaz'yev play down their disagreements over Glaz'yev's decision to run for president, in a TV interview.

**27 January 2004** The Basmannyy Court fails to find illegal the resolution on the forced delivery of former Yukos boss Mikhail Khodorkovskiy for questioning. The court rejects an appeal by Khodorkovskiy's lawyer, Anton Drel.

**27 January 2004** Deputy Prime Minister Viktor Khristenko states that Russia produced 421m tonnes of oil in 2003, up 11% on 2002. Refining was up 2.6% in 2003 to 190m tonnes. Oil exports for the year were 226m tonnes, of which 35m went to Belarus and Ukraine. Natural gas output was up 4.2% (by 25bn cubic metres) in 2003 to 620bn cubic metres. Supply to the domestic market was up nearly 3% to 423bn cubic metres. Exports amounted to 190bn cubic metres. To Belarus and Ukraine they were up by 1bn cubic metres to over 46bn.

The Economic Development and Trade Ministry states that Russia's GDP in 2003 rose 7%, while in 2002 it rose 4.7%.

The Ministry of Economic Development and Trade states that the drain of capital from Russia was down by nearly 2bn dollars in 2003. The recorded drain of private-sector capital for the period compared was down to about 17.8bn dollars, against 19.7bn in 2002.

**27 January 2004** Security Council deputy secretary Valentin Sobolev and head of the International Committee of the Red Cross delegation in Russia Marco Altherr meet in Moscow to discuss Chechnya. They state that there had been "improvement and stabilization of the situation in Chechnya".

Ingush President Murat Zyazikov has a meeting with United Nations Undersecretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Jan Egeland at his residency in Magas. They discuss displaced persons.

**27 January 2004** The MOD outlines its plan for Russian naval development up to 2040-2050. Navy commander-in-chief, Adm Vladimir Kuroyedov states: "The main characteristics of the new stage of development of the navy are, first, that the fleet will not be ocean-going, but for coastal waters. The second characteristic feature is that we will build fewer large ships like the ones we have today, but will build more multi-purpose vessels."

The MOD states that the budget funds allocated are not sufficient to completely rearm the Russian air force.

Col-Gen Nikolay Solovtsov, commander of the Strategic Missile Forces, states that the General Staff of the Russian armed forces has approved their development plan for the period up to 2015.

An article in *Trud* discusses the rivalry between the MOD and General Staff.

**28 January 2004** The Federation Council relieves Valeriy Goreglyad of his post of the first deputy chairman. The Federation Council elects Dmitriy Mezentsev and Svetlana Orlova to the posts of deputy chairmen.

**28 January 2004** Goskomstat Chairman Vladimir Sokolin states that the percentage of Russian citizens whose incomes are below the minimum subsistence level has dropped from 25% in 2002 to 20% in 2003.

**29 January 2004** A human rights rally is held outside the Prosecutor-General's office in Moscow protesting at the arrest of former Yukos oil head Mikhail Khodorkovskiy.

**29 January 2004** Vladimir Putin says that the federal centre "does not have a goal of returning to a Soviet-style supercentralization". He meets Sergey Kiriyyenko, presidential representative for the Volga Federal District, and they discuss the issue of bringing regional laws into line with federal legislation. Putin says he does not wish to draw powers away from the regions into the centre.

**29 January 2004** The Yukos board of directors recommends that the company management resume talks with the former principal shareholders of Sibneft on the proposed merger of the two companies.

**30 January 2004** An article in *Kommersant* states that Russia will hold the largest strategic exercises since 1982, designed to counter terrorism.

## ***February***

**2 February 2004** Vladimir Putin tells the government to supervise the delimitation of powers between the centre and the regions. He recalls that a package of bills on the delimitation of powers between the federal centre, the constituent parts of the

Russian Federation and municipalities is at the Duma "but much has yet to be done to fine-tune them so that they suit the federal centre, the regions and municipalities".

**2 February 2004** Dmitry Rogozin expresses concern over the split in Rodina.

**2 February 2004** Representatives of the core shareholders of Yukos and Sibneft sign a protocol which reverses their previous deal and splits the companies.

**3 February 2004** *Severnnyy Kavkaz* reports that an unidentified explosive device was detonated in the courtyard of a Jewish synagogue in Derbent, Dagestan.

A car bomb explodes in Vladikavkaz killing a woman and several Internal Troops servicemen.

**3 February 2004** Goskomstat says Russia's GDP in current prices rose 7.3% on the year to R13.305bn in 2003.

**4 February 2004** The Union of Russian Soldiers' Mothers' Committees has decided to set up the Unified Popular Party of Soldiers' Mothers.

An MOD source states that in 2003, a total of 263 MOD servicemen were killed in Chechnya.

**4 February 2004** Lt-Gen Yuriy Antipov, chief of Naval Aviation and Naval Air Defence, is interviewed in *Vozdushno-kosmicheskaya oborona*. He discusses plans for the development of the Russian navy. He says the navy should have aircraft carriers.

**4 February 2004** Minister of Economic Development and Trade German Gref addresses the fifth annual conference of the US Chamber of Commerce in Russia. He says it is administrative reform that is the key reform in Russia.

**5 February 2004** The Duma Council say the Duma will consider the issue of extending the presidential term of office to seven years. Deputies are expected to discuss the amendment to the constitution in the first reading before the end of February. Vladimir Putin says he opposes extending the presidential term.

Vladimir Putin declines to take part in television election debates.

**5 February 2004** An MOD source states that the Federal Special Construction Service and the Railway Troops will cease to exist as independent structures this year, as they will be made subordinate to the MOD. A meeting chaired by Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov was held at the ministry on 3 February to discuss the issue.

**6 February 2004** A bomb goes off on the Moscow metro near Paveletskaya station. The authorities suspect it is a terrorist bombing. The death toll is 39, while 122 people, including a child, are taken to hospital. Vladimir Putin blames the incident

on Chechen separatist leaders. The separatist leadership condemns the blast, as does the Council of Muftis of Russia.

Duma speaker Boris Gryzlov calls for tougher anti-terrorist legislation.

Deputy speaker of the Duma, Dmitriy Rogozin, calls for the imposition of a state of emergency and the restoration of the death penalty following the bombing.

The Nord-Ost regional public organization for protection of terrorist act victims sends an open letter to Vladimir Putin in connection with the terrorist act. It calls on Putin to guarantee the right to life and safety.

**6 February 2004** Duma speaker Boris Gryzlov says that the Yedinaya Rossiya faction will not support the bill on extending the presidential term of office from four to seven years submitted to the Duma by the Ivanovo legislative assembly.

**7 February 2004** The FSB takes over the investigation of the Moscow metro bombing.

Moscow mayor Yury Luzhkov says that "in connection with the terrorist act in the Moscow metro, measures to register visitors will be tightened in the city".

Two natives of the Caucasus resembling the man in a photofit of a suspect in the Moscow metro bombing are detained in Moscow.

The Chechenpress news agency web site issues a statement by Akhmed Zakayev. He calls for talks with the Putin leadership about Chechnya.

**7 February 2004** Presidential candidate Ivan Rybkin goes missing.

**7 February 2004** Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Aleksey Kudrin says according to preliminary information, the net flight of capital out of Russia reached 3bn dollars in 2003. In 2003 the figure stood at 8bn dollars and in 2000 at 24bn.

**8 February 2004** Vladimir Putin signs a decree amending the list of nuclear materials, equipment and special non-nuclear materials and related technologies subject to export control.

**9 February 2004** The police begin a search for missing presidential candidate Ivan Rybkin.

**9 February 2004** Vladimir Putin says he will not take part in TV election debates.

**9 February 2004** Deputy head of the FSB Vyacheslav Ushakov calls for the moratorium on the use of the death penalty to be lifted. He is addressing Duma deputies. He criticises some CIS members for double standards in fighting terrorism. He says the special services should receive additional powers in the fight against terrorism.

**9 February 2004** Lt-Gen Yuriy Kovalev is appointed deputy emergencies minister.

**9 February 2004** Deputy Prime Minister Galina Karelova says the number of people living below the poverty line in Russia stands at 27,800,000.

**10 February 2004** Russian presidential candidate Ivan Rybkin turns up in Kiev.

**10 February 2004** Vladimir Putin addresses senior officers from the various power ministries on fighting terrorism.

**10 February 2004** The Yukos chairman, Simon Kukes, says Russia will occupy the first place in world oil production surpassing Saudi Arabia by 2009.

**10 February 2004** The first deputy chief of the general staff, Yuriy Baluyevskiy, says the Russian armed forces are holding a strategic command and control exercise. These exercises "began on 20-29 January". He says Russia will be holding joint exercises with NATO in the field of antimissile defence during 2004-05.

A major mobilization command post exercise of the Siberian Military District starts in Altay Territory and the Republic of Altay. It is being carried out in accordance with the troops training plan of the District and is headed by the first deputy commander Vladimir Bakin.

Aviation Maj-Gen Aleksandr Kulakov is appointed deputy commander of the Baltic Fleet with responsibility for the air force and air defence.

**10 February 2004** Deputy Prime Minister Boris Aleshin says attempts are being made to accuse Russia, without any grounds, of handing over "dangerous" defence technologies to "rogue" states and of breaching the existing international obligations in this sphere.

**10 February 2004** A group of Russian human rights champions put forward a plan to end the war in Chechnya. In a statement on the Chechen rebel website *Daymohk*, they propose that the Kremlin conduct talks with Chechen rebel leaders and recognize the right of the Chechen people to self-determination.

**11 February 2004** The official website of presidential candidate Vladimir Putin is opened on the Internet. It is located at [www.putin2004.ru](http://www.putin2004.ru).

An article by Vyacheslav Kostikov in *Argumenty i Fakty* discusses Vladimir Putin's image in Russian society.

**11 February 2004** Duma chairman Boris Gрызlov says the Duma will not consider the introduction of the death penalty for terrorism.

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Deputy Interior Minister Aleksandr Chekalin says "The possibility of placing armed police officers aboard flights, on an official basis, is being examined."

**11 February 2004** Prosecutor-General Vladimir Ustinov says he does not rule out new charges against key shareholders of the Yukos oil major.

**11 February 2004** The Duma turns down a bill which would have banned members of the government from belonging to political parties and public associations.

**11 February 2004** Presidential Aide Aslanbek Aslakhanov rules out the possibility of talks with the leader of the Chechen separatists, Aslan Maskhadov.

**11 February 2004** The Volga-Urals Military District launches a regional command post exercise on the territory of Tatarstan.

The Conventional Weapons Agency Enterprises says its enterprises increased the defence product output by 10% in 2003.

**12 February 2004** Vladimir Putin gives a major speech on his policies at Moscow University.

**12 February 2004** The Duma committee for Legislation and State Construction rejects the proposal of Ivanovo Region's legislators on extending the length of the presidential term in office from four to seven years. The motion has been tabled for the Duma's plenary session on 18 February.

**13 February 2004** Presidential candidate Ivan Rybkin is in London. He says will not return to Moscow at least until 14 March, the day of the presidential elections. He claims he was drugged whilst in Ukraine and filmed in a compromising situation.

**13 February 2004** The Duma approves Vladimir Lukin as the new human rights ombudsman.

**13 February 2004** Acting Interior Minister Rashid Nurgaliyev states that a total of 25,600 crimes involving corruption were identified in Russia in 2003, which is almost 4% more than in 2002.

**13 February 2004** Deputy head of the presidential administration Viktor Ivanov says that the number of terrorist acts in 2003 grew by 50%.

**13 February 2004** The former president of Chechnya, Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, is killed by a car bomb in Qatar.

**15 February 2004** The Rodina bloc breaks up at its congress. The Russian Regions Party (RRP), which was part of the Rodina bloc, decides to assume the name Rodina. It is led by Dmitriy Rogozin, who was a co-chairman of the RRP together with Sergey Glaz'yev, who is removed from the co-chairmanship. Former chief of the Russian Central Bank Viktor Gerashchenko is elected in his stead.

**16 February 2004** Chechen President Akhmat Kadyrov says it will be possible to root out terrorism in the republic after one of the Chechen rebel leaders, Shamil Basayev, and the separatist ideologist Movladi Udugov have been removed. Kadyrov says he would like the federal centre to hand over control of the antiterrorist operation in the North Caucasus, which is currently being run by the operational HQ of the Russian Interior Ministry, to the Chechen Interior Ministry.

**16 February 2004** Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov flies up to the Northern Fleet to take overall charge of the second phase of the armed forces' strategic command and staff exercises.

The director-general of the Russian Agency for Munitions, Viktor Kholstov, says experts of the Agency have identified about 33,000 chemical munitions that are in a critical condition. A single system of state environmental control and monitoring will be established at Russian chemical weapons storage and destruction facilities.

Viktor Ozerov, chairman of the Federation Council committee for defence and security, says the first stage of the defence-industry reform programme is lagging behind schedule and only four out of 40 holding companies have been created.

**17 February 2004** Duma speaker Boris Gryzlov says the proposal by Chechen President Akhmat Kadyrov to transfer the direction of the operation in the North Caucasus to the Chechen Republic's Interior Ministry is premature.

**17 February 2004** Lt-Gen Pyotr Rovenskiy, the MVD troops' deputy commander-in-chief, says the process of phasing out heavy combat materiel from the inventory of the MVD Internal Troops has been going on since 2003. Under the MVD's development plan up to 2005, adopted by the president, heavy combat materiel, namely main battle tanks, infantry fighting vehicles, and artillery, is being phased out.

**17 February 2004** The Northern Fleet holds naval exercise in the Barents Sea.

**17 February 2004** Goskomstat says the number of Russians living on a per capita income below the official subsistence level fell to 23.1m people in October-December 2003 from 31.2m people in July-September.

**18 February 2004** A bill amending two articles in the Russian Federation's Criminal Code, Nos 205 and 57, has passed its first reading unanimously (432 votes cast "for" with a minimum of 226 required) in the State Duma. The bill proposes increasing the term of imprisonment for terrorist offences without aggravating circumstances to 8-12 years (the current Criminal Code stipulates 5-10 years); for terrorist offences with aggravating circumstances to 10-20 years

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(currently 8-15 years) and for terrorist offences with particularly aggravating circumstances to 15-20 years or life imprisonment (currently 10-20 years).

**18 February 2004** The Duma rejects the draft law proposing to extend the presidential term from four years to seven.

**18 February 2004** Moscow city authorities ban a rally on the day of the 60th anniversary of the deportation of the Chechen people by Stalin.

**18 February 2004** Russia's armed forces complete the Security-2004 strategic command and staff exercise. Vladimir Putin in Plesetsk gives a high assessment of the exercises. "No action comparable in scale has been held for 20 years."

The Strategic Missile Troops launch an RS-18 intercontinental ballistic missile from the Baykonur cosmodrome. The training launch of the RS-18, which is also known as the UR-100N UTKh, was part of the strategic command and staff exercises. In the West the missile is known as the SS-19 'Stiletto'. A nuclear submarine from the Northern Fleet carries out a training launch of a ballistic missile from the Barents Sea. The sea-based missile was launched from an underwater position. A combat training launch of a Topol intercontinental missile is carried out from the Plesetsk cosmodrome. In the West this missile is known as the SS-25 'Cycle'. A ballistic missile launched from the nuclear submarine Karelia self-destructs on deviating from its planned trajectory. The missile was launched from the Northern Fleet missile carrier as part of the strategic exercise. A second Sineva missile launched from the nuclear submarine Karelia in the Barents Sea also self-destructs on deviating from the designated trajectory.

Vladimir Putin says the Russian army will soon get new missile complexes which will allow it to guarantee the country's strategic security for many years to come. He says Russia will remain a major nuclear power; it is too soon to invest in missile defence systems; and that Russia's military programmes are not directed against the USA.

Valeriy Subbotin, the head of military programmes and international agreements department of the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, is interviewed in the *Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kur'yer*. He says the Russian armed forces and military units of other power-wielding agencies will receive some 450 models of new weapons and military hardware in 2005. He says in 2004, R341.2bn (about 12bn dollars) was allocated for the defence order, which constitutes 14% of the federal budget expenditures and over 40% of the funds allocated for the needs of Russia's defence and security.

**18 February 2004** An article in *Argumenty i Fakty* discusses poverty in the Russian Federation.

**18 February 2004** Economic Development and Trade Minister German Gref expresses doubts that Russia's GDP could be doubled in 10 years. Russia's GDP rose 7.3% on the year at current prices to 433.7bn dollars in 2003. In 2002, GDP grew 4.7% from 306.7bn dollars in 2001 and 259.8bn dollars in 2000. Deputy Economic Development and Trade Minister Arkadiy Dvorkovich says that GDP is expected to grow 5% to 6% in 2004. Goskomstat states that total foreign

investment in Russia rose to 29.699bn dollars in 2003 from about 19.800bn dollars in 2002.

Direct foreign investment rose 69.4% year on year in 2003 to 6.781bn dollars, accounting for 22.8% of total foreign investments in the period. Portfolio foreign investment in the period stood at 401m dollars, down 15.1% year on year, accounting for 1.4% of total foreign investments. Other investments amounted to 22.517bn dollars, up 47.1% on the year, accounting for 75.8% of total foreign investments in the period.

2.330bn dollars of foreign investment went into manufacturing, 10.516bn dollars into the retail trade and catering industries, including 5.734bn dollars into foreign trade, 681m dollars into telecommunications, 640m dollars into financial sector, 402m dollars into the transportation sector, 255m dollars into construction industry.

Total accumulated foreign investment in Russia amounted to 57.014bn dollars by the end of 2003, up 32.8% compared with the end of 2002. Of this sum 26.131bn dollars was direct investment, 1.429bn dollars was portfolio investment and 29.454bn dollars was other types of investment.

Germany, Cyprus and the UK remain the largest investors, accounting for 17.9%, 14.2% and 12.7% respectively of total accumulated foreign investment, followed by the USA with 9.3%, France with 8.4%, the Netherlands with 6.3%, Luxembourg with 6.1%, Japan with 3.3%, the Virgin Islands with 2.6% and Switzerland with 2.5%.

**19 February 2004** A gas pipeline is blown up in the Ramenskiy District of Moscow Region. A criminal investigation is opened.

**19 February 2004** The Justice Ministry makes changes to the registration documents of the Russian Regions Party, which is now to be called the Rodina political party. Sergey Glaz'yev criticises this move and says the Rodina Duma faction continues to consider itself to be the representative of a coalition of people's patriotic forces and not a single party.

Deputy speaker of the Duma and co-chairman of the Rodina Party Dmitriy Rogozin says registration of the Rodina Party is an important step towards creating a social and patriotic alternative to the party of power.

**19 February 2004** A special commission has been set up to investigate all incidents that occurred during exercises conducted by the Northern Fleet.

The first deputy chief of staff, Col-Gen Yuriy Baluyevskiy, says that Russia is cooperating with foreign partners to develop efficient missile defence systems. "Russia is not against missile defence and it is developing related cooperation, particularly with the United States and NATO."

Baluyevskiy outlines three main directions for the perfection of Russia's strategic offensive forces. "The first direction is the creation of new missile complexes and new carriers for these complexes, including a sea carrier." The second direction "is the development and application of effective counter-measures to neutralize any systems of anti-missile defence, including future ones". The third direction is the

development of Russia's strategic offensive forces as "the search for new methods of combat use for these forces".

**19 February 2004** Col-Gen Nikolay Rogozhkin, the chief of staff of MVD Internal Troops, says the Internal Troops, which currently number up to 200,000 servicemen, will be reduced by 33,000 by the end of 2005.

**19 February 2004** Yabloko leader Grigory Yavlinskiy confirms that Yabloko will boycott the presidential election.

**20 February 2004** Vladimir Putin submits to the Duma a bill on merging Perm Region and Komi-Permyak Autonomous Area, thus forming a new constituent part of the Russian Federation, namely Perm Territory. In December 2003 an overwhelming majority of residents of these regions voted for the merger.

**20 February 2004** Vladimir Putin meets the chairman of the State Committee for Control Over the Illegal Trafficking of Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances, Viktor Cherkesov. Cherkesov says the narcotics flow from Afghanistan is still a major problem.

**21 February 2004** Vladimir Putin calls on the Duma to "thoroughly review the entire body of anticorruption legislation for quality, completeness and areas of conflict".

**22 February 2004** Education Minister Vladimir Filippov says teaching of the basics of Orthodox culture in schools can only be optional.

**23 February 2004** A ROMIR opinion poll says that 22% of Russians would not fight to defend their Motherland. 70% say they would fight. 1,630 people participated in the poll.

**23 February 2004** Professor Aleksandr Sharavin, director of the Institute of Political and Military Analysis, candidate of military sciences and member of the Academy of Military Sciences, outlines his vision of a completely new structure for the Russian armed forces outside the MOD, to be developed initially alongside the old military structure, with Putin preventing any conflict between the two by taking personal charge of both. He is interviewed on *Ekho Moskvy* radio.

**24 February 2004** Vladimir Putin dismisses prime minister Mikhail Kasyanov and the Russian government in accordance with Article 117 of the Russian Constitution. He states: "This decision is not related to an assessment of the results of the activities of the former composition of the government, which on the whole I consider to be satisfactory. It has been dictated by a desire to once again set out my stance on the issue of what the course for the country's development will be after 14 March 2004. I think Russia's citizens have the right to and should know the proposals for the composition of the supreme executive body of the state if

I am elected president of Russia." He appoints Deputy Prime Minister Viktor Khristenko as acting prime minister.

**24 February 2004** Presidential candidate Irina Khakamada says she would drop out of the presidential race if two other candidates, independent left-winger Sergey Glazyev and Communist Nikolay Kharitonov, do the same.

**25 February 2004** Irina Khakamada, who is standing as an independent candidate for election to the Russian presidency, decides to remain in the presidential race.

**24 February 2004** The economic development and trade minister, German Gref, says the Russian rouble "will be fully convertible in 2007". Gref says Russia's GDP has grown by 40% in the past five years.

Revised figures from the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade state that Russia's GDP rose by 7.3% in 2003, rather than by 7% as announced earlier. In 2002, GDP rose by 4.7%. Russia's foreign trade surplus stood at 59.985bn dollars in 2003, up from 46.335bn dollars in 2002. In 2003, Russia's exports stood at 135.4bn dollars, up from 107.3bn dollars in 2002, while imports rose to 75.4bn dollars from 61bn dollars in 2002.

The total accumulated amount of foreign investments into Russia's economy totalled 53.6bn dollars as of 1 October 2003, up 34.7% on the year. As of 1 October, foreign direct investments (FDI) accounted for 46.2% of the investments, portfolio investments accounted for 2.1%, and other investments accounted for 51.7% of the total investments. As of 1 October 2002, FDI accounted for 48.7% of the investments, portfolio investments accounted for 3.5%, and other investments accounted for 47.8% of the total investments.

In January-September 2003, foreign investments into Russia totalled 20.9bn dollars, up 61.9% on the year. The main investors into Russia's economy were Germany, the USA, Cyprus, Great Britain, France and the Netherlands, which account for 70% of total foreign investments and 70.8% of direct foreign investments.

**25 February 2004** The results of the all-Russian census of 2002 for the constituent parts of the Russian Federation and Russia have been published on the census's official site, [www.perepis2002.ru](http://www.perepis2002.ru). As of October 2002, Russia's population is 145,164,000; of this, 106,427,000 (73.3%) lived in cities and towns, and the remaining 38,737,000 (26.7%) in the countryside.

**25 February 2004** A routine meeting of the state border commission is held at the FSB, chaired by FSB Director Nikolay Patrushev. It discusses forming a new system of protection of state Russian borders.

**26 February 2004** A probe begins in the Northern Fleet HQ on the recent missile misfirings during military exercises in January.

Vladimir Putin says that the issue of army transfer to contract service will be resolved by the end of 2007.

Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov announces that by the end of 2007, contract servicemen will make up 50% of the Russian armed forces.

## ***March***

**1 March 2004** Vladimir Putin nominates Mikhail Fradkov as a candidate for prime minister. Putin instructs the government to work with the new prime minister to "complete as rapidly as possible" preparations for administrative reform.

**1 March 2004** It is reported that well-known Chechen field commander Ruslan Gelayev was killed on 29 February in the mountains of Dagestan. This is confirmed by Chechen sources on 3 March.

**1 March 2004** Vladimir Putin says that in 2003 Russia exceeded its targets in military and technical cooperation with foreign states by 26%. The volume of exports of armaments and military hardware was over the 5bn-dollar mark and reached 5.5bn dollars.

**1 March 2004** A statement by a previously unknown armed group Gazoton Murdash (Followers of the Holy War) claims responsibility for the 6 February blast in the Moscow metro. The statement is made by the leader of the group, Lom-Ali Chechenskiy.

**2 March 2004** Opposition group Committee-2008 calls for a boycott of the presidential election.

**2 March 2004** Acting Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says that shortcomings observed during recent strategic command and staff training exercises were related only to the failed launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile by the Northern Fleet. He blames the Navy for this.

**3 March 2004** The total volume of exports from the Russian Agency for Conventional Weapons enterprises rose by 8.5% in 2003 as against 2002. Exports amounted to 885.4m dollars in 2003.

**3 March 2004** Col-Gen Valeriy Baranov, commander of the Combined Federal Force in the North Caucasus, says about 80 guerrilla units operate in Chechnya.

**3 March 2004** The Supreme Court of Tatarstan suspends the hearing of the so-called Tatar alphabet case and decides to appeal to the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation. The court hearing, which began on 2 March, is considering a lawsuit filed by the Tatarstan Public Prosecutor against the decision by the State Council of Tatarstan to transfer the Tatar writing to the Latin alphabet. This decision contradicts the Russian law "On the languages of peoples of the Russian Federation".

**4 March 2004** New Rodina leader Dmitry Rogozin says he will back Vladimir Putin in the presidential election.

**5 March 2004** The Duma approves the appointment of Mikhail Fradkov as prime minister. This decision was adopted with 352 deputies voting in favour, 58 against and 24 abstaining.

**5 March 2004** Prime minister Mikhail Fradkov says the Russian army needs to be reformed "in a planned and clear-cut manner," and defence spending should be increased considerably. He says the new Russian government will take under special control the process of guaranteeing Russia's defence capability and security, and special attention should be given to technically equipping the Russian armed forces. In 2004 the state defence order will total R150bn which is 20% more than in 2003.

He says a better tax collection mechanism is needed.

**5 March 2004** OMON raids the office of the National Bolshevik Party (NBP) in Moscow. 17 NBP members are detained.

**5 March 2004** The Duma releases Dmitriy Rogozin from his duties as deputy chairman of the chamber, and elects Sergey Baburin in his place.

**5 March 2004** Ivan Rybkin withdraws from the presidential election.

**6 March 2004** The delegates of the first congress of the all-Russian Motherland People's Patriotic Union public organization express support for leader Sergey Glazyev in the forthcoming presidential elections. Glaz'yev says he will set up his own party after the presidential election.

**6 March 2004** Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov is interviewed in *Le Figaro*.

**6 March 2004** The deputy general prosecutor in the Southern Federal District, Sergey Fridinskiy, says seven citizens of the Russian Federation who fought for the Taleban in Afghanistan have been officially charged after being handed over to the Russian authorities.

**8 March 2004** Magomed Khambiyev, the defence minister of the separatist Chechen leadership, surrenders to the pro-Moscow authorities in Chechnya.

**9 March 2004** The economic adviser to Vladimir Putin, Andrey Illarionov, is interviewed in *Argumenty i Fakty*.

**9 March 2004** Vladimir Putin issues a decree that reduces the number of government agencies. The decree disbands 13 federal ministries, two state committees, one federal commission, four federal services and four agencies. This leaves a total of 17 ministries. There is now one deputy prime minister instead of six. The following appointments are made by individual decrees:

Sergey Ivanov	Defence Minister
Aleksey Kudrin	Finance Minister
German Gref	Economic Development & Trade Minister
Sergey Shoygu	Emergencies Minister
Ex-Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov	Secretary of the Security Council
Dmitriy Kozak	Head of the Government Administration
Aleksandr Zhukov	Deputy Chairman of the Russian Government

The agency also reported the following appointments:

Aleksey Gordeyev	Minister of Agriculture & Fisheries
Yuriy Chayka	Justice Minister (held this post previously)
Yuriy Trutnev	Minister of Natural Resources
Mikhail Zurabov	Minister of Health & Social Development
Aleksandr Sokolov	Minister of Culture & Information
Viktor Khristenko	Minister of Industry & Energy
Andrey Fursenko	Minister of Education & Science
Igor Levitin	Minister of Transport & Communications

The Russian president will be in charge of the activities of five ministries, five federal services and two federal agencies. These are: the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Emergencies Ministry, the Foreign Ministry, the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Justice. The president is also in charge of the State Courier Service, the Foreign Intelligence Service, the Federal Security Service, the federal service for control over the trafficking of narcotics and psychotropic substances (formerly the State Committee for Control over the Trafficking of Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances) and the Federal Guard Service. The president will also be in charge of two agencies - the Main Directorate of Special Programmes of the President of the Russian Federation and the presidential affairs directorate.

**9 March 2004** Vladimir Putin signs a decree releasing Viktor Kazantsev from the post of plenipotentiary representative of the president in the Southern Federal District. By another decree he appoints former Deputy Prime Minister Vladimir Yakovlev to this post.

**10 March 2004** Yabloko files lawsuits contesting the results of the December Duma election in 170 constituencies.

**11 March 2004** The first meeting of the new Russian government takes place. Prime minister Mikhail Fradkov says the new administrative structure will be formed over the next few weeks. He says the government reshuffle is only the start of administrative reform.

Deputy prime minister Aleksandr Zhukov is to head a new interdepartmental commission for distributing functions of federal executive power. This will be the successor of the government commission for carrying out administrative reform, which was headed by former deputy Prime Minister Boris Aleshin.

**11 March 2004** The Swiss prosecutor's office freezes the personal bank accounts of Mikhail Khodorkovskiy, Platon Lebedev, Leonid Nevzlin and others prominent in the Yukos affair.

**11 March 2004** Interior Ministry and Federal Security Service subunits clash with a group of gunmen near the Georgiyevskaya railway station in Stavropol Territory.

**11 March 2004** The Russian Agency for Munitions says a recent statement by a US Deputy Under-Secretary for Defence, Lisa Bronson, that about 40 biological weapons facilities of the former Soviet Union are dangerous because of insufficient safety and monitoring is unfounded.

Member of the Duma Committee on Security Gennadiy Gudkov criticises Bronson's statement.

**12 March 2004** The commander of Russian Space Troops, 58-year-old Col-Gen Anatoliy Perminov, is appointed head of the Federal Space Agency (former Russian Aerospace Agency).

**12 March 2004** Boris Aleshin has been appointed head of the Federal Industry Agency.

**13 March 2004** Abu-al-Walid, an Arab field commander in Chechnya, says on Al-Jazeera TV, that Chechen fighters will launch strong attacks and move the struggle and war into Russian cities.

**14 March 2004** Vladimir Putin wins the presidential election in the first round with an overwhelming majority.

### Presidential Election Results

Candidate	Votes	Votes (%)
Vladimir Putin	48,931,376	71.22
Nikolay Kharitonov	9,440,860	13.74
Sergey Glaz'yev	2,826,641	4.11
Irina Khakamada	2,644,644	3.80
Oleg Malyshkin	1,394,070	2.03
Sergey Mironov	518,893	0.76
Against All	2,377,768	3.46

The Central Electoral Commission claimed a turnout of 64.3%.

**15 March 2004** The election headquarters of presidential candidate Sergey Glaz'yev says there have been violations during the course of the election

The Prosecutor-General's Office says it has not detected any serious violations during voting.

**15 March 2004** Vladimir Putin asks the government to finish making amendments to laws necessitated by the new government structure on time, by 9 May.

**15 March 2004** Irina Khakamada, former co-chairman of the Union of Right Forces, says she intends to set up a party whose ideology will be social liberalism.

**15 March 2004** The heads of executive authorities were elected in six regions on 14 March, while a second round of gubernatorial elections will have to be conducted in four others. Aleksandr Volkov has been re-elected as president of Udmurtia, Aleksandr Tkachev has been re-elected as head of Krasnodar Territory and Vladimir Kulakov has been re-elected in Voronezh Region. The incumbent Anatoliy Artamonov won the gubernatorial election in Kaluga Region, and incumbent Yuriy Yevdokimov won in Murmansk Region. The head of administration of Chita Region, Ravil Geniatulin, has been elected for a second term. However, a second round of elections will have to be held in Altay Territory, Arkhangelsk and Ryazan Regions and the Koryak Autonomous Area.

**15 March 2004** Lt-Gen Vladimir Popovkin is appointed commander of the Russian Space Troops. Popovkin replaces Col-Gen Anatoliy Perminov.

**16 March 2004** Federal human rights ombudsman Vladimir Lukin expresses suspicion over the high degree of unanimity in a number of regions during the presidential elections in Russia.

**16 March 2004** A member of staff at the Audit Chamber, Sergey Abramov, is appointed to head the Chechen government in place of Anatoliy Popov.

**16 March 2004** GTRK television reports that Police Col Vladimir Rastegayev has been appointed as the head of the antiterrorist Centre T in southern Russia. Rastegayev is 41. Previously he headed the criminal investigation department at Stavropol Territory's Main Directorate of Internal Affairs.

**17 March 2004** Presidential plenipotentiary representative in the Southern Federal District Vladimir Yakovlev says he is "categorically against any talks with leaders of Chechen separatists".

The Chechen State Council approves Sergey Abramov, 32, for prime minister of the republic.

The Chechen separatist leadership denies any connection with the group called "Movsar Barayev's commandos". It claims this is a provocation by the Russian government.

The Chechen separatist leadership discusses its military plans for the summer. Chechen President Aslan Maskhadov chaired a military session with the Chechen commanders - the commanders in charge of fronts, sectors and areas - in Chechnya's Shatoy District on 16 March.

**17 March 2004** Yedinaya Rossiya wins a strong majority in the elections for the Tatarstan State Council.

**18 March 2004** A jury in the Moscow City Court has found Mikhail Kodanev and Aleksandr Vinnik guilty of organizing the murder of Duma deputy Sergey Yushenkov. Mikhail Kodanev was co-chairman of the Liberal Russia party from among supporters of businessman Boris Berezovskiy,

**18 March 2004** The FSB says the recent explosion in an apartment block in Arkhangelsk was caused by a gas leak.

**18 March 2004** The URF political council meets to assess the results of the presidential elections and discuss a number of organizational issues.

**18 March 2004** Col-Gen Valeriy Baranov, commander of the Combined Group of Forces in the North Caucasus, considers it premature to raise the issue of transferring tasks of fulfilling counterterrorist operations to the Chechen Interior Ministry. Such a proposal was earlier made by Chechen President Akhmat Kadyrov.

The separatist Chechen president Aslan Maskhadov thanks the EU for its recognition of Stalin's deportation of the Chechen people in 1944 as genocide and asks it to move a step further and recognize the ongoing Chechen war as genocide.

**18 March 2004** Navy C-in-C Fleet Adm Vladimir Kuroyedov is interviewed in *Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kur'yer*. He says the naval component in the Russian strategic forces may exceed 50%.

**19 March 2004** Vladimir Putin, Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov and almost the entire Russian government, including the foreign and defence ministers, attend a joint sitting of the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade in Moscow.

Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov appoints Sergey Naryshkin (former deputy head of the Kremlin administration) deputy head of the Russian government staff. Dmitriy Kozak is the head of the Russian government staff.

**19 March 2004** Deputy Prosecutor-General Vladimir Zubrin says the investigators are inclined to think that the explosion in a block of flats in Arkhangelsk in the early hours of 16 March was the result of a deliberate criminal act. He says the main theory is a gas explosion, but the main question that the investigation is trying to answer is whether the explosion was due to carelessness or caused deliberately. In the opinion of investigators, one could say with a high level of confidence that this was a crime of a deliberate nature. He rejects any idea of terrorism.

**19 March 2004** Moscow's Basmannyy court decides to extend the pre-trial custody for the ex-head of Yukos, Mikhail Khodorkovskiy, until 25 May.

**19 March 2004** The Audit Chamber criticizes the way funds were spent by the board for the restoration of Chechnya and the Chechen government, when these structures were headed by Anatoliy Popov.

**19 March 2004** The Duma adopts at three readings at once the federal constitutional law "On the formation of a new constituent part of the Russian Federation as a result of the merger of Perm Region and the Komi Permyak Autonomous Area".

**20 March 2004** A congress of the patriots of Russia says a powerful patriotic organization is to be set up in Russia before the end of 2004. This congress is organised by opponents of CPRF leader Gennadiy Zyuganov, Gennadiy Semigin and Gennadiy Seleznev. Sixteen parties and about 60 organizations attend the forum.

**20 March 2004** The Finance Ministry submits to the government a blueprint for further tax reform.

**22 March 2004** Minister of Economic Development and Trade German Gref says his ministry "had drawn up a four-year programme to halve the number of people on incomes below subsistence level". He says "we were planning to reach a 10-percent level of poverty by 2008; however, the president has set us a very ambitious task - to bring the date forward by a year". At present 20.4% of citizens have incomes below subsistence level. Over the past five years this figure has gone down by 10 percentage points.

**22 March 2004** Culture and Mass Communications Minister Aleksandr Sokolov says that there will be no censorship.

Mikhail Seslavinskiy, head of the Federal Press and Mass Communications Agency, intends to defend the right of the media to cover acts of terrorism.

**22 March 2004** Former head of the Presidential Administration Aleksandr Voloshin will head the council of directors of United Energy Systems.

**22 March 2004** Finance Minister Aleksey Kudrin says capital flight will decrease. "Whereas five years ago net capital flight from Russia amounted to 2-4bn dollars, you all know that this has come down over the past few years and last year net capital flight came to just under 3bn dollars. This year we will reach a historic watershed - we expect net capital coming into the Russian Federation this year for the first time since 1990. This is another outcome of the reforms."

**22 March 2004** The Federal Atomic Energy Agency rules out the possibility of terrorists obtaining atomic weapons in Russia.

**22 March 2004** Russian navy Commander-in-Chief Admiral of the Fleet Vladimir Kuroyedov says the heavy nuclear missile cruiser Petr Velikiy has been moored in port because it is in a dangerous condition. "The ship is in such a state that it

could go sky high at any minute. This is particularly dangerous given that it has a nuclear propulsion unit." He then later said the situation was not so bad.

**23 March 2004** A command post exercise begins at the 62nd Russian military base in the Georgian town of Akhalkalaki.

The MOD holds a conference on housing for military officers. It presents a programme for savings and mortgage credits for military officers. Vladimir Putin attends the conference. Defence minister Sergey Ivanov says the number of families of officers and warrant officers serving with the Russian armed forces without flats or in need of better housing has been stabilized "at the level of just over 160,000". He says at the moment there are in the forces 136,000 families without flats, including 91,000 who have no permanent accommodation, and also 28,000 families who need better housing.

**23 March 2004** The head of government staff, Dmitriy Kozak, says he will deal with administrative reform.

**23 March 2004** Col-Gen Valeriy Baranov, the commander of the Combined Group of Forces in the North Caucasus, says some 3,000 servicemen of the Interior Ministry are to be withdrawn from Chechnya by mid-April.

**24 March 2004** Aleksandr Yakovlev, chairman of the presidential commission for rehabilitation of the victims of political repression, expresses concern about authoritarian tendencies in the Russian leadership.

**24 March 2004** The former co-chairman of the URF Irina Khakamada declares she is leaving the URF to form a new policy party, Free Russia.

**25 March 2004** Vladimir Putin issues a decree approving a new structure for the presidential administration, to be headed by Dmitriy Medvedev. Vladislav Surkov has been appointed deputy presidential chief of staff and will also be a presidential aide; Igor Sechin will be another deputy presidential chief of staff as well as a presidential aide.

Aleksandr Abramov has been appointed a Russian presidential aide; Larisa Brycheva - a Russian presidential aide and chief of the state legal directorate; Dzhokhan Pollyyeva - a Russian presidential aide; Sergey Prikhodko - a Russian presidential aide; Igor Shuvalov - a Russian presidential aide; Viktor Ivanov - a Russian presidential aide; Aleksey Gromov - presidential press secretary; and Igor Shchegolev - protocol chief.

Other appointments include confirming the incumbent plenipotentiary presidential representatives in the Federal Districts.

The new administration will include 17 directorates and the staff of the counsellors to the president. There are several differences with the previous structure. Two directorates, information and the press service, will combine. The economic directorate will be abolished, and this will be dealt with by the White House. But there will be a joint expert directorate. According to the decree, the assistants, the press secretary and the head of protocol can also lead independent subdivisions of

A Russian Chronology: January – March 2004

the administration and organize the activities of the state council and other consultative bodies attached to the president.

A presidential decree gives the following structure of the presidential administration:

The staff of the Russian Federation Security Council (with the status of a directorate)

The staffs of the Russian Federation president's plenipotentiary representatives in the federal districts (with the status of a directorate)

The staff of the counsellors to the Russian Federation president

The Russian Federation president's state law directorate

The Russian Federation president's chancery (with the status of a directorate)

The Russian Federation president's monitoring directorate

The Russian Federation president's reference service (with the status of a directorate)

The secretariat to the head of the Russian Federation president's administration (with the status of a directorate)

The Russian Federation president's foreign policy directorate

The Russian Federation president's domestic policy directorate

The Russian Federation president's personnel issues and state awards directorate

The Russian Federation president's state service directorate

The Russian Federation president's directorate for guaranteeing citizens' constitutional rights

The Russian Federation president's directorate for information support and documentation

The Russian Federation president's directorate for dealing with public inquiries

The Russian Federation president's press service and information directorate

The Russian Federation president's protocol and organization directorate

The Russian Federation president's expert directorate.

**25 March 2004** The Russian government begins work on the draft budget for 2005. It approves the forecasts of the country's medium-term (2005-2007) social and economic development presented by the Economic Development and Trade Ministry, the Finance Ministry and the Central Bank. The aim is to increase GDP by 6.2% in 2005.

**04/03**

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**25 March 2004** Russian human rights ombudsman Vladimir Lukin criticises the draft law allowing terrorist suspects to be detained for up to 30 days without charge.

**25 March 2004** Vladimir Putin meets Ingush President Murat Zyazikov in Sochi.

**25 March 2004** An article in *Kommersant* discusses the development of the air defence system.

**26 March 2004** Army Gen Vyacheslav Tikhomirov, deputy interior minister and commander-in-chief of the Interior Ministry Troops, says the number of terrorist acts in Chechnya in 2003 went down by 30%, compared with 2002. He says that the Joint Group of Forces in Chechnya is planning to reduce its manpower by 3,000 over the next three months. The Group currently has just over 70,000 personnel in Chechnya. The Interior Ministry took charge of the counter-terrorism operation in Chechnya on 1 September 2003. Tikhomirov says Chechen forces are not ready to fight rebels by themselves.

**26 March 2004** Vladimir Putin signs a law creating a new member of the Russian federation, Perm Territory. Perm Territory will come into being on 1 January 2005 and will replace Perm Region and the Komi-Permyak Autonomous Area.

**26 March 2004** The Duma passes amendments to a number of laws on contractual military service. The amendments were submitted to parliament by the president. In particular, they bring in a three-month trial for those wishing to serve under contract.

**27 March 2004** Vladimir Putin outlines changes to the Presidential Administration, in a TV interview.

**27 March 2004** The Central Committee of the CPRF holds a plenum. It is likely to discuss the succession to Gennady Zyuganov as leader.

**27 March 2004** Col Ilya Shabalkin, official spokesman for the regional operational staff for the antiterrorist operation in the North Caucasus, says militants led by Arab mercenary Abu al-Walid are attempting to recruit local teenagers in Chechnya.

**28 March 2004** Audit Chamber Chairman Sergey Stepashin says the results of the 1990s privatization in Russia will not be revised. He says an assessment of the privatization process, now being drafted by the Audit Chamber, will put a political and legal full stop in the case and ensure a stable business climate.

**29 March 2004** Fresh exercises of the Black Sea Fleet are to begin today in the central and eastern areas of the Black Sea under the command of its commander-in-chief, Vladimir Masorin.

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**29 March 2004** Former Yukos boss Mikhail Khodorkovskiy writes an article in *Vedomosti* in which he accepts the legitimacy of the Putin leadership.

**29 March 2004** It is announced that a new specialized military-patriotic TV channel, *Zvezda*, will go on the air in February 2005.

**30 March 2004** The newly-appointed minister of culture and mass communications, Aleksandr Sokolov, says that journalists should practise self-censorship.

**30 March 2004** The Moscow municipal court sentences Mikhail Kodanov, the organizer of the murder of MP Sergey Yushenkov, and the actual perpetrator, Aleksandr Kulachinskiy, to 20 years imprisonment.

**30 March 2004** Vladimir Sokolin, head of the Federal Service for State Statistics, says Russia is heading towards an acute shortage of workers within a few years because of its demographic crisis. Male life expectancy has shortened by six years in the past decade. On average men live to just 58.5 while women on average live to 72. About 200,000 men of working age die each year in Russia from injury, accident or poisoning. The birth rate in Russia is half that needed merely to maintain the level of population. The country will begin to experience an acute labour shortage as early as 2007. The average age of Russia's population is now 37.7, older by three years since 1989.

**30 March 2004** Col-Gen Vasiliy Smirnov, chief of the General Staff's Mobilization Directorate, says that no conscripts will serve in Chechnya starting from 2005. "Under the federal purpose-oriented programme, the 42nd Motor-Rifle Division of the armed forces and the 46th Detached Brigade of the Interior Ministry force will be manned with professional servicemen by the end of 2004. We expect no conscripts to stay in Chechnya starting from 2005."

Vladimir Putin signs a decree "On the military conscription of Russian citizens in April-June of 2004 and on discharging enlisted servicemen from military service." Russian Federation citizens aged between 18 and 27, who are not in the reserve and who are subject to military service under the federal law 'On military duty and military service' must be conscripted between 1 April and 30 June 2004, their total number being 166,050 men. Head of the General Staff Mobilization Directorate Col-Gen Vasiliy Smirnov says the spring 2004 conscription campaign will not be enough to fill conscript positions in the armed forces. Smirnov says that the current manning procedure will satisfy the armed forces until 2006 and then there will be even fewer conscripts because of the poor demographic environment in the country. By 2010-2012 the manning percentage might go down to 50 to 55% if the manning system were not modified.

Smirnov says 216 people will be called up for alternative service this spring.

Former deputy defence minister Nikolay Mikhaylov says the present-day defence industry is in a deeper crisis than the army. He says the defence industry is ceasing to provide the armed forces with modern weapons, that the Russian defence industry needs despecialization and integration with civilian industries as the main mobilization base for arms production. "Relations between the state and defence

industry should be based upon a state defence order planned for two to three and more years."

**31 March 2004** Central Bank of Russia Chairman Sergey Ignat'yev says the net outflow of capital from Russia, after accounting for incoming financial flows, shrank from 16bn to 3bn dollars between 2001 and 2003.

**31 March 2004** The Tatarstan Supreme Court upholds in part an appeal by Russian Deputy Prosecutor-General Aleksandr Zvyagintsev to rule some points of the republic's constitution invalid.

**31 March 2004** The Memorial human rights organisation says that "according to incomplete data, 78 people have been abducted in Chechnya since early 2004. Thirty-three of them were freed, 41 went missing and four found dead".

**31 March 2004** The Black Sea Fleet begins exercises.

## Russian Foreign Policy: A Chronology

### January-March 2004

**1 January 2004** Russia's ambassador at large for relations with the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and other international Islamic organizations, Veniamin Popov, says determination of the form of cooperation between Russia and the OIC is a "lengthy process that will take quite a few months".

**3 January 2004** A Chinese Foreign Ministry delegation sets off for Moscow to hold consultations on the second round of the six-party talks on the North Korean nuclear crisis.

**5 January 2004** Russo-Chinese consultations on the North Korean nuclear issue take place in Moscow, at the Foreign Ministry. They state that nuclear-free status is essential to the Korean Peninsula. They call for the "earliest possible convening in Beijing of the second round of six-sided talks" on the Korean problem. The consultations were conducted on the Russian side by the director of the First Asia Department of the Foreign Ministry, Yevgeniy Afanas'yev, and on the Chinese side by Ambassador at Large Ning Fukui, who handles problems of the Korean Peninsula. The Chinese diplomat was received by Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Losyukov.

**6 January 2004** Aleksandr Sharavin, director of the Political and Military Analysis Institute is interviewed in *Komsomolskaya Pravda* on Russian military reform and Russo-Chinese relations.

**7 January 2004** Georgian Foreign Minister Tedo Japaridze visits Moscow on a private visit. He has talks with the General Staff on withdrawing Russian forces from Georgia.

**8 January 2004** Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Losyukov says the USA should pay attention to Pyongyang's willingness to freeze its nuclear programme.

**8 January 2004** Yuriy Baluyevskiy, the first deputy chief of the General Staff of the armed forces, has talks with Georgian Foreign Minister Tedo Japaridze. He says Georgia's proposal for the withdrawal of Russian bases from Georgia in three years does not suit Moscow.

Duma deputy Andrey Kokoshin says that Russia must have military bases in former Soviet states.

**9 January 2004** Vladimir Putin arrives in Kazakhstan on a two-day official visit. The Russian delegation includes Deputy Prime Minister Viktor Khristenko, deputy head of the presidential administration Sergey Prikhodko, Transport Minister Vadim Morozov, Culture Minister Mikhail Shvydkoy and Energy Minister Igor Yusufov.

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Deputy Prime Minister Viktor Khristenko says Russia and Kazakhstan are drawing up a long-term programme for the transit of Kazakh oil across Russian territory until 2020.

The heads of Russian LUKoil and Kazakhstan's KazMunayGaz national oil and gas company have signed an agreement on reciprocal transfer of rights for using minerals in compliance with which the Russian company will obtain a 50% share in the production sharing agreement on the Tyub-Karagan sector in the Kazakh part of the Caspian Sea, and also an agreement on a joint geological survey in the neighbouring Atash sector of the Caspian Sea.

**9 January 2004** Igor Ivanov has a telephone conversation with EU Secretary-General Javier Solana, the EU's High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy. They discuss Georgia.

**12 January 2004** Deputy Prime Minister Boris Aleshin rejects US assertions about alleged supplies of Russian arms to Iraq in violation of international sanctions.

**12 January 2004** The Georgian ambassador to Moscow, Zurab Abashidze, expresses concern about the issue of Russian passports in Abkhazia.

**13 January 2004** The Saudi government invites Chechen President Akhmat Kadyrov to visit Saudi Arabia.

**13 January 2004** The Georgian ambassador to Russia, Zurab Abashidze, is summoned to the Foreign Ministry (MFA) in connection with anti-Russian statements made in Tbilisi by the leader of the Georgian People's Front, Nodar Natadze, who threatened to sabotage Russian military bases in Georgia.

US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Lynn Pascoe says the USA is prepared to finance the withdrawal of two Russian military bases from Georgia.

**13 January 2004** A Federation Council delegation visits Syria for talks with Syrian President Bashar al-Asad. The delegation is headed by the coordinator of the Russian-Arab interparliamentary association, Ramazan Abdulatipov.

**13 January 2004** The Tula instrument-making design bureau denies selling arms to Iraq.

**13 January 2004** Igor Ivanov says Russia "welcomes Pyongyang's readiness to freeze its nuclear programme." "Russia is interested in securing a nuclear-free status of the Korean Peninsula, its remaining in the area of nuclear nonproliferation, ensuring the security of all countries on the peninsula and developing peaceful cooperation in northeastern Asia."

**14 January 2004** The president of Chechnya Akhmat Kadyrov sets off on an official visit to Saudi Arabia.

**14 January 2004:** Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says that Russian bases will not be pulled out of Georgia in the same way as they were once pulled out of Germany in the early 1990s. He says withdrawal will be a lengthy process.

**14 January 2004** Igor Ivanov visits China.

**14 January 2004** Col-General Aleksandr Rukshin, deputy chief-of-staff of the Russian armed forces, Chief of the Main Directorate for Operations of the Main Intelligence Directorate believes that more member states make NATO more uncontrollable. "We cannot prohibit NATO from accepting one state or another, which meets its requirements. However, it is worth mentioning that the more member-states NATO accepts, the less controllable it becomes."

**14 January 2004** Deputy foreign minister Aleksandr Saltanov visits Egypt.

**15 January 2004** The MFA says Russia could withdraw its bases from Georgia earlier if there is additional financing from external sources.

**15 January 2004** Vladimir Putin says the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) should become a transcontinental bridge between Asia and Europe. Putin writes to SCO executive secretary, Zhang Deguang. SCO foreign ministers meet in Beijing. Igor Ivanov says that Russia wants another round of the six-sided talks on North Korea with the participation of the USA, Russia, China, Japan and the two Korean states to be held as soon as possible.

**15 January 2004** Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov expresses concern over possible US plans to set up military bases in Eastern Europe.

**15 January 2004** Chief medical officer of health, Gennadiy Onishchenko, gives instructions for medical checks to be tightened on Chinese citizens coming through checkpoints on the state border. This is because of SARS.

**15 January 2004** Kaliningrad Region's representative in the Federation Council Nikolay Tulayev says that the problem of railway transit from mainland Russia to Kaliningrad Region across Lithuania has been solved.

**15 January 2004** Vladimir Putin calls for coordination of actions of the special services of the countries in the antiterrorist coalition. "Of particular importance is the coordination of the work of special services in the framework of the international antiterrorist coalition, in the format of the CIS Antiterrorist Centre, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Collective Security Treaty Organization."

**17 January 2004** First Deputy Foreign Minister Valeriy Loshchinin is interviewed on *Radio Mayak*. He discusses Russian policy toward the near abroad. He says Georgia should not use force in Abkhazia. He also discusses the withdrawal of Russian troops from Georgia, the Azov-Kerch straits crisis in Russo-Ukrainian relations, and the Moldovan-Transdnestr settlement process.

**17 January 2004** Chechen President Akhmat Kadyrov visits Saudi Arabia.

**17 January 2004** Aleksey Gordeyev, deputy prime minister who is also agriculture minister, says talks that have been held with states about to join the EU have confirmed Russia's concerns as regards changes for the worse that will occur in trade, economic, legal, social and other terms after 10 new members are admitted to the EU. He has talks with Slovenia, Slovakia, Hungary, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Poland and Malta as part of the Green Week agroindustrial exhibition in Berlin. Gordeyev also discusses Russia's trade in 2003. He says trade turnover in 2003 increased by 22% to about 186bn dollars. Exports grew almost by 22.3% and reached 130.5bn dollars. Imports were up 20.1% to almost 55.5bn dollars. Thus, the positive balance of trade remained significant and was about 70bn dollars.

**17 January 2004** Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Saltanov visits Lebanon.

**18 January 2004** Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Saltanov says the state of affairs in the Middle East at present gives rise to much concern. He says "the 'road map' - the most rational plan to achieve a Palestinian-Israeli settlement, and in effect one to which there is no alternative - is not being implemented". He expresses concern over Syrian-Israeli deadlock. He is visiting Lebanon.

**19 January 2004** Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov visits India. Russia and India intend to sign a contract on the sale of the Admiral Gorshkov heavy aircraft carrier. They will also discuss military technical cooperation and the development of the military and political situation in the world's crisis regions and the organization of interaction in the struggle against international terrorism.

**19 January 2004** Igor Ivanov publishes an essay entitled "The Iraq crisis and the struggle for a new world order," on the MFA website. He calls for an international political settlement on Iraq and warns that the Middle East crisis could merge with the Iraqi one.

**19 January 2004** Deputy Prime Minister Viktor Khristenko denies Ukrainian media reports alleging that Russia is seeking to acquire the Kerch peninsula as payment for Ukraine's gas debt.

**19 January 2004** Gazprom states that it will assume responsibility for supply of gas to Georgian consumers if the company ITERA's problems obtaining gas are not resolved soon.

**20 January 2004** World Bank President James Wolfensohn visits Moscow for talks with Vladimir Putin. During its existence the World Bank has made about 50 loans to Russia to a total value of 10bn dollars. They discuss Iraq's debts to Russia and Russian economic reform. Wolfensohn also has talks with Mikhail Kasyanov.

**20 January 2004** The MFA expresses concern over rising tension in Ajaria in Georgia.

"Attempts by forces in Georgia which are inclined towards extremism, particularly the Kmara organization, to provoke tension in Ajaria are extremely dangerous and threaten to destabilize the situation in the country as a whole...the escalation of confrontation between the central authorities of Georgia and the leadership of Ajaria, threats of the use of force and organization of provocative acts could lead to the most serious consequences and play into the hands only of those who have no interest in Georgia's development along the path of democracy and legality."

**20 January 2004** Kyrgyz Prime Minister Nikolay Tanayev visits Moscow.

**20 January 2004** Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says he has not ruled out the possibility of Russia, India and China holding a meeting in 2004 to discuss security in the Asia-Pacific Region. He is visiting India. The contracts for the Admiral Gorshkov aircraft carrier are signed.

**20 January 2004** The foreign minister of the Palestinian National Authority, Nabil Ali Sha'th, arrives in Moscow for talks.

**20 January 2004** Head of Iran's Chamber of Commerce, Industries and Mines Ali Naqi Khamushi calls on Russia to remove the "high wall of tariffs" between the countries of Iran and Russia in order to build closer ties.

**20 January 2004** An article by Sergey Strokan in *Kommersant* mocks the notion of US-Russian strategic partnership.

**21 January 2004** Vladimir Putin relieves Dmitriy Rogozin of the duties of special representative of the Russian president for Kaliningrad Region in connection with the enlargement of the European Union. The Presidential Administration states that it was satisfied with Rogozin's work. The position is no longer necessary.

**21 January 2004** Igor Ivanov expresses concern that that implementation of the road map for a Palestinian-Israeli settlement has reached an impasse. He is having talks in Moscow with his Palestinian counterpart, Nabil Sha'th.

**21 January 2004** FSB head Nikolay Patrushev meets Georgian Minister of State Security Valeri Khaburdzania. He says Russia has extradited to Georgia Shota Chichiashvili, a resident of the Pankisi Gorge, who has been charged by Georgian prosecutors with a number of serious crimes.

**21 January 2004** Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov says Kyrgyzstan may give the Russian Federation a number of defence enterprises to pay off its debts to Russia. He is having talks in Moscow with Kyrgyz Prime Minister Nikolay Tanayev.

**21 January 2004** An article in *Vedomosti* discusses Russian arms sales to India.

**22 January 2004** Vladimir Putin and British Prime Minister Tony Blair have a telephone conversation during which they discussed Iraq and the Middle East.

**22 January 2004** The MFA says Russia is willing to "re-establish friendly relations and mutually beneficial partnership with Georgia and is expecting reciprocal steps from Tbilisi". The MFA emphasises the importance of energy cooperation. It complains about Georgia deferring debt payments to Russia. Georgia's debt to Russia stood at \$22.5 million as of 1 October 2003.

**22 January 2004** Itera Holding Ltd and Transneft joint-stock company, which supply gas to Belarus, inform Gazprom that Beltransgaz (Belarusian gas transport company) had exhausted the volume of gas allocated for Belarus for January 2004 and had been illegally siphoning off gas since 16 January. They will therefore cease supplying gas to Belarus on 24 January.

**23 January 2004** Vladimir Putin and Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka hold a telephone conversation at Lukashenka's initiative. They discuss gas supplies.

**23 January 2004** Vladimir Putin visits Ukraine.

Energy Minister Igor Yusufov says Russia and Ukraine are preparing a 15-year agreement on Russia's oil transit via Ukraine.

**23 January 2004** French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin visits Moscow for talks with Igor Ivanov.

Igor Ivanov says Russia "attaches an great significance to convening an international conference on Iraq". Igor Ivanov says the forum "should draw up a programme for the restoration of Iraq which could get international support."

Igor Ivanov has a telephone conversation with Israeli foreign minister Silvan Shalom.

**23 January 2004** First Deputy Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Trubnikov says that Moscow is concerned over continuing support for terrorists in Chechnya from some non-governmental organizations in Turkey.

**24 January 2004** Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Aleksey Kudrin. says Russia wants to join the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 2004, but not at any price. He is speaking at Davos, where he is taking part in the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum.

**24 January 2004** Gazprom says it is willing to resume gas supplies to Belarus only at commercial prices.

**24 January 2004** Mikhail Margelov, chairman of Federation Council Committee on International Affairs says:

It is quite clear that the Americans have gone down a blind alley in their attempts to restore peace in Iraq. It was possible to win the war alone, and they demonstrated this successfully. It is impossible to win the peace alone. It is quite clear that without the international community, without Russia and its influence in Iraq, without the Iraqi people, it is impossible to build peace in Iraq. The Americans acknowledge this.

**25 January 2004** The Prosecutor-General's Office has filed an international extradition request for Leonid Nevzlin and Vladimir Dubov, senior shareholders in Yukos. Nevzlin and Dubov are in Israel.

**25 January 2004** The co-leader of the Rodina bloc Dmitriy Rogozin, advocates a "rational, national egoism" as the basis for Russian foreign policy. In a TV interview, Rogozin explained that this means Russia boosting its defence capability, strengthening its borders and generally sticking up for itself in international forums such as the Council of Europe. He stressed that the days of a "spineless Russia" on the international stage were no more.

**25 January 2004** Chairman of the foreign affairs committee of the Federation Council Mikhail Margelov says that a delegation of Russian MPs will be formed in the near future to go to Iraq. He discusses the possible trip with Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari at the World Economic Forum in Davos.

**25 January 2004** Igor Ivanov attends the inauguration of new Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili in Georgia.

**26 January 2004** The MFA says Council of Europe experts will no longer be based permanently in Chechnya.

**26 January 2004** LUKoil wins a tender to explore several major deposits of gas and gas condensate in Saudi Arabia.

**26 January 2004** US Secretary of State Colin Powell visits Moscow for talks with Igor Ivanov and Vladimir Putin. Powell says the USA has no plans to set up bases in Georgia.

**26 January 2004** Vladimir Putin says that Aleksandr Lukashenko, the president of Belarus, has confirmed Minsk is ready to switch to market relations in the gas sector.

**26 January 2004** Russian forces of the 201st MR Division hold an anti-terrorist exercise in Tajikistan.

The chief of the General Staff of the armed forces, Anatoliy Kvashnin, reaffirms that Russia plans to seek military ties with the United States, NATO, the European Union and China.

**26 January 2004** The MFA calls on the United Nations Security Council "to return to considering the mandates of Unmovic and IAEA in Iraq and on the basis of their reports take a corresponding decision".

**26 January 2004** Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Losyukov has talks in Moscow with his Japanese counterpart, Hitoshi Tanaka.

**27 January 2004** The Economic Development and Trade Ministry states Russia's foreign trade surplus amounted to 59.6bn dollars in 2003. In 2002, the foreign trade surplus was at 46.416bn dollars. Last year exports rose to 134.4bn dollars against 107.3bn dollars in 2002, while imports came to 74.8bn dollars, rising 22.6% on the year. Russia's exports to non-CIS countries amounted to 113.3bn dollars in the period, up 24.6% on the year, while Russia's imports from non-CIS countries stood at 59.6bn dollars, up 22.1% on the year.

Russia's non-CIS foreign trade surplus amounted to 53.7bn dollars in 2003, according to the ministry, while the State Customs Committee said that non-CIS foreign trade surplus in 2003 was at 54.4bn dollars. Russia's total foreign trade turnover in 2003 stood at 209.2bn dollars, posting a 24.3% increase on the year, and non-CIS foreign trade turnover rose 23.7% on the year to 172.9bn dollars.

**27 January 2004** The MFA welcomes a statement by British Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Denis McShane that Chechen extremists maintain close contacts with Afghan terrorists. McShane says that some foreign terrorists who had been trained in Afghanistan and who had ties with Al-Qa'idah then went to war in Chechnya.

**27 January 2004** The secretary of the Security Council, Vladimir Rushaylo, visits Belarus. He says the gas dispute between the two countries should be resolved soon.

**27 January 2004** US Secretary of State Colin Powell is interviewed on *Ekho Moskvy* on his visit to Russia.

**27 January 2004** Chief of Staff of the French Armed Forces Henri Bentegeat holds negotiations with his Russian counterpart, Anatoliy Kvashnin, in Moscow.

**27 January 2004** The first deputy director of the FSB and head of the border service, Col-Gen Vladimir Pronichev, arrives in Dagestan to check security on the border with Georgia and Azerbaijan.

**28 January 2004** LUKoil states that it is acquiring another 795 petrol stations in the USA.

**28 January 2004** An article by Igor Ivanov entitled "Russia in Asia and Asia in Russia" is published on the MFA website. It discusses Russian foreign policy towards Asia and Siberia, and the Russian Far East.

**28 January 2004** The Russian and Spanish defence ministers, Sergey Ivanov and Federico Trillo, agree to set up a mixed commission for military and military-technical cooperation in different areas. Trillo is visiting Moscow.

**28 January 2004** Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Razov holds consultations with his Greek colleague, Ioannis Magriotis. The MFA says that Russia and Greece are "interested in carrying out large-scale investment projects in the fuel and energy sector, including construction of a trans-Balkan oil pipeline from Burgas (Bulgaria) to Alexandroupoli (Greece)".

**28 January 2004** Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov visits India. He says Russia is calling for the UN to assume a more active role in Iraq.

**28 January 2004** Deputy Prime Minister Vladimir Yakovlev says the Russian government plans to sign an agreement with Iran to annually supply 2-3m tonnes of grain via the Caspian Sea. He also says the Russian government is negotiating with China the possibility of using Russia's trans-Siberian railway to supply Chinese goods to Europe and CIS countries as well as the use of other routes via Russia and Kazakhstan. In future, it is planned to use more intensively Russia's Baykal-Amur railway, which currently works at only 20-25% of its capacity.

**28 January 2004** Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says that Russia is honouring its commitments over its bases in Georgia.

**28 January 2004** Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Chizhov attends a workshop in Moscow entitled "The current state of EU-Russian relations".

**29 January 2004** Chechen envoy Akhmed Zakayev visits Germany. The MFA protests.

Igor Ivanov has talks in Moscow with UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Jan Egeland on Chechnya. The MVD asks the UN to send humanitarian aid mainly directly to Chechnya, rather than to neighbouring republics.

**29 January 2004** Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Kislyak has talks with US Under-Secretary of State John Bolton in Moscow on disarmament and non-proliferation.

**29 January 2004** The MFA condemns the suicide bombing in Jerusalem.

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**29 January 2004** The MFA expresses concern over the human rights of the Russian-speaking population in Latvia. Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights Alvaro Gil-Robles has just visited Latvia.

**29 January 2004** Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Aleksey Kudrin says Russia expects specific action from Belarus regarding introduction of the Russian rouble in Belarus as from 1 January 2005.

**29 January 2004** Valeriy Loshchinin, first deputy foreign minister, says it is essential "to restore trust between Tbilisi and Sukhumi to resolve the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict". He says that Georgia must resolve this problem peacefully. He is interviewed in *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*.

**29 January 2004** Russian-Ukrainian talks begin in Moscow to decide on the legal status of the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait. It is being held at the level of deputy foreign ministers. The Russian negotiator is Viktor Kalyuzhnyy.

**30 January 2004** Itera Holding and Transnaft deny reports that they have extended their gas delivery contracts with Belarusian gas distributor Beltransgaz for February.

**30 January 2004** Deputy Secretary of the Russian Security Council Oleg Chernov and US Under-Secretary of State John Bolton discuss international security problems, in Moscow. The sides looked at issues of bilateral relations, focusing in particular on cooperation between the two countries in maintaining strategic stability, and in ensuring the nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

**30 January 2004** South Africa and Russia hold interministerial consultations in Pretoria. The Russian delegation at the consultations is led by Deputy Foreign Minister Anatoliy Safonov, and the South African by Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Aziz Pahad.

**30 January 2004** MFA special envoy Lev Mironov says Russia has no objections to international inspections of the former Russian military base at Gudauta in Abkhazia.

**30 January 2004** Transneft says that it plans to increase the capacity of the Baltic Pipeline System by almost 50% from the current 30m tonnes to 42m tonnes annually.

**30 January 2004** Igor Ivanov and British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw have a telephone conversation. They discuss the situation in the Middle East, Iran and Georgia.

**30 January 2004** Deputy Foreign Minister Viktor Kalyuzhnyy welcomes the talks between Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan which were held in Asagbat on 29-30 January on the problem of dividing the bed of the Caspian Sea.

**31 January 2004** Itera states that it will supply Belarus with 516m cubic metres of gas in February.

**31 January 2004** Vladimir Andreyev, the deputy director of the MFA's department with responsibility for work to address new challenges and threats attends a meeting of the Rio Group in Montevideo.

## ***February***

**1 February 2004** Konstantin Kosachev, chairman of the Duma Committee for International Affairs, is interviewed on TV on Russo-US relations. He says Russia will not tolerate being spoken to "from a position of strength".

**2 February 2004** Russian Academician Yevgeniy Velikhov has talks at the Atomic Energy Ministry with a representative Japanese delegation led by Senior Vice Minister for Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Yamato Inaba on building the first thermonuclear reactor (ITER).

**2 February 2004** Igor Ivanov visits Belarus. He call for the "very rapid restoration of Iraqi sovereignty ... Russia is ready to be involved in the rebuilding of that country as soon as the political situation there is stabilized."

**2 February 2004** The MFA welcomes the extension of the mandate for the UN Interim Force in Lebanon.

**2 February 2004** The MFA welcomes the adoption by the UN Security Council of Resolution No 1524 on Georgia-Abkhaz conflict.

The first deputy chief of the General Staff, Col-Gen Yuriy Baluyevskiy, says Russia cannot withdraw from its bases in Georgia within three years.

**2 February 2004** Russia's permanent representative at the OSCE, Aleksandr Alekseyev, condemns Latvia for its treatment of Russian-language schools in Latvia.

**2 February 2004** Deputy Defence Minister Mikhail Dmitriyev visits Vietnam to discuss bilateral military and technical cooperation.

**2 February 2004** An article in *Kommersant* discusses US policy towards the CIS.

**2 February 2004** The foreign ministers of Belarus and Russia, Syarhey Martynaw and Igor Ivanov, sign a "programme of joint action in foreign policy during 2004-05 by the signatories to the Treaty on the Creation of the Union State", plus a joint plan of measures by the ministries and a resolution on the outcome of the joint board. Ivanov is in Minsk.

**3 February 2004** Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Losyukov says Russia is still considering whether to join the Kyoto protocol.

**3 February 2004** Russian Minister of Economic Development and Trade German Gref and Bulgarian Minister of Economy Lydia Shuleva discuss boosting trade and economic cooperation.

**3 February 2004** Deputy foreign minister Aleksandr Losyukov and the North Korean ambassador to Russia, Pak Ui-chun discuss "aspects of the next, second round of six-party talks in Beijing on the Korean Peninsula's nuclear issue".

**4 February 2004** Minister of Energy Igor Yusufov says it is unjust to link Russia's entry to the WTO with the ratification by the country of the Kyoto protocol.

**4 February 2004** Minister of Economic Development and Trade German Gref addresses the fifth annual conference of the US Chamber of Commerce in Russia. He says administrative reform is the key reform in Russia.

**4 February 2004** Igor Ivanov has talks in Moscow with his Italian counterpart Franco Frattini. He says Moscow is ready to cooperate with international organizations in the sphere of political settlement of the situation in Chechnya.

**4 February 2004** Vladimir Putin says Russia is prepared for a constructive dialogue with the European Union but is counting on Europe making concessions and taking into account Russia's legitimate interests. Putin meets Italian Foreign Minister Franco Frattini in Moscow.

Igor Ivanov says Russia is "ready for compromise with the European Union on extending the agreement on partnership and cooperation between Russia and the EU to the union's new members".

"Russia is worried about the possible formation of a legal vacuum when the new members join the EU since the bilateral agreements that we had earlier with these 10 countries will be annulled. In these conditions, our relations with these countries may suffer, mainly in the economic sphere with several categories of goods ... we are currently looking for a compromise in order for us to be ready to extend the agreement on partnership and cooperation to the new members. In this connection, Russia has sent the EU a list of 14 unresolved issues that touch on various areas in our relations."

**4 February 2004** The MFA says Russia intends to offer the sides in the Nagornyy Karabakh conflict (Armenia, Azerbaijan) "assistance in working out a compromise solution".

**4 February 2004** Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov says the issue of Iraq's debt to Russia "should be settled with the Iraqi authorities, with the legal government of this country". Igor Ivanov says Moscow "plans to expand the presence of Russian oil companies in Iraq". He says talks on expanding the

activities of Russian oil companies in Iraq are currently underway with the interim Governing Council of that country.

**4 February 2004** Deputy Foreign Minister Viktor Kalyuzhnyy says Russia is hoping that "Iran will change its position regarding the problem of division of the Caspian Sea".

**4 February 2004** Energy Minister Igor Yusufov says the Russian Energy Ministry is negotiating with the Kazakhstan Energy Ministry the question of joint oil supplies to China.

**4 February 2004** The Duma issues a statement opposing amendments to the Latvian law on education, which infringe the rights of the Russian-speaking population. It calls on the Latvian parliament to "examine the education of the country's Russian-speaking young generation as part of the democratic process".

**4 February 2004** Deputy Foreign Minister Viktor Kalyuzhnyy says the waters of the Sea of Azov and of the Kerch Strait are "a single complex, which should serve as the basis for the delimitation of the Kerch Strait between Russia and Ukraine".

**4 February 2004** Viktor Komardin, the director-general of Rosoboroneksport, attends the DefExpo India-2004 arms exhibition. Komardin says Russia's share on the Indian arms market is about 70%. In 2003 Russia delivered more military items to India than to China.

**5 February 2004** Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov says the question of whether or not Iraq possesses weapons of mass destruction should be finally clarified by international inspectors.

**5 February 2004** Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksey Fedotov criticises the US visa regime for Russian citizens.

**5 February 2004** Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev arrives in Moscow for an official visit.

**5 February 2004** The MOD says Russia welcomes in principle a US security initiative relating to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. However, Russia thinks its implementation will violate highly important provisions of international law and national laws. The head of the Russian Defence Ministry's main directorate for international military cooperation, Col-Gen Anatoliy Mazurkevich, had talks on this issue with US Under-Secretary of Defence Douglas Feith in the Pentagon on 3 February.

**5 February 2004** The Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) secretary-general Nikolay Bordyuzha says it will establish official contacts with NATO in the

near future. "Solid contacts will soon be established with NATO with a view to jointly finalizing measures to deal with existing challenges and threats."

**5 February 2004** Deputy Duma Chairman Dmitriy Rogozin describes as "madness" the plan to teach main subjects in mother tongue in Latvian schools.

**6 February 2004** US President George Bush talks to Vladimir Putin by telephone and expresses his condolences to all Russian people over the act of terrorism on the Moscow metro.

**6 February 2004** Azerbaijani President Ilkham Aliev visits Russia to sign economic agreements and agreement on military-technical cooperation. A total of four agreements are signed. The presidents discuss Nagornyy Karabakh and issue a statement.

First Deputy Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Trubnikov, who co-chairs the OSCE Minsk Group on Karabakh, says the format of the talks on Nagornyy Karabakh should be expanded to four parties. He believes the third and fourth parties to the negotiating process should be the Azerbaijani refugees and the Armenian leadership of Nagornyy Karabakh.

**6 February 2004** The Duma instructs its Committee for CIS Affairs and Relations with Compatriots Abroad to consider the possibility of retaliatory legislative measures in response to Latvia's discrimination against teaching in Russian.

**6 February 2004** Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov attends a meeting of NATO defence ministers and the Munich Security Conference. He condemns double standards in dealing with terrorism. He says he hopes that the NATO-Russia relationship will continue to develop.

**7 February 2004** Defence minister Sergey Ivanov attends the 40<sup>th</sup> Munich Security Conference. For the text of his speech see:  
[http://securityconference.de/konferenzen/rede.php?menu\\_2004=&menu\\_konferenzen=&sprache=en&id=126&](http://securityconference.de/konferenzen/rede.php?menu_2004=&menu_konferenzen=&sprache=en&id=126&).

**7 February 2004** Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Aleksey Kudrin arrives in the USA to attend meetings of G8 finance ministers and central bank heads.

**7 February 2004** Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Aleksey Kudrin says the problem of Iraqi debts is gradually being resolved and Russia is prepared to join the group of Iraq's donors.

**8 February 2004** The meeting of G8 finance ministers in Florida includes an action plan on Afghanistan. The G8 will also fight funding of terrorism in Central Asia.

A Russian Chronology: January – March 2004

**9 February 2004** Col-Gen Anatoliy Mazurkevich, head of the Main Directorate for International Military Cooperation of the MOD, says Russia is ready to support American initiatives to tighten up the nonproliferation regime for weapons of mass destruction only if this is given a foundation in international law.

**9 February 2004** The joint Russian-North Korean demarcation commission complete its work.

**9 February 2004** First Deputy Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Trubnikov says believes that Moldovan President Vladimir Voronin refused to sign the Russian plan on the Dnestr settlement in November due to external pressure.

**9 February 2004** The Russian and Iranian foreign ministers, Igor Ivanov and Kamal Kharrazi, discuss problems of a postwar settlement in Iraq during a telephone conversation.

**10 February 2004** Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili visits Russia.

**10 February 2004** Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov attends a meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Union State of Russia and Belarus. He has talks with Belarusian Prime Minister Syarhey Sidorski. He says Russia and Belarus have not managed to reach a decision on Gazprom's exports of Russian gas to Belarus. He says that there is still a chance that the Russian rouble will be introduced as the only legal tender in Belarus from 1 January 2005.

**10 February 2004** The Russian and Kazakh security councils sign a plan of joint action for 2004 in Astana. Vladimir Rushaylo is present.

**10 February 2004** Economic Development and Trade Minister German Gref says it is unlikely that Russia will be able to join the WTO within the next 2 years. "It is certain that Russia will not be able to enter the WTO in 2004, and it is still questionable if it will be possible in 2005." Maksim Medvedkov, deputy economic development and trade minister, has said that Russia would not join the WTO before 31 December 2004, but would be able to complete the entry talks by this date.

**11 February 2004** Russian oil majors say they are not going to cut their oil output despite OPEC's decision to do so.

**11 February 2004** Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov meets Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili. He says that Russia was not going to step up its military presence either in Abkhazia or Georgia.

**11 February 2004** Itera says it is ready to continue natural gas supplies to Belarus even though Belarus has already taken nearly all of the 516m cu.m. of gas ordered for February. Itera says that the price will have to be raised.

**11 February 2004** Kazakh Defence Minister Mukhtar Altynbayev meets the secretary of Russia's Security Council, Vladimir Rushaylo, in Astana.

**11 February 2004** Igor Ivanov has talks in Moscow with Jordanian foreign minister Marwan al-Mu'ashir. He says Russia is "to expand" the opportunities for Russian companies' participation in rebuilding Iraq. Jordan invites Russia to set up a bilateral intergovernmental commission for cooperation. Ivanov says that "Russian companies are interested in taking part in tenders Jordan has been holding to implement several big projects", especially in "the construction of a gas pipeline in Jordan". Both Russia and Jordan call for an end to the occupation phase in Iraq.

**11 February 2004** Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Losyukov talks on Russo-Japanese relations. He says relations are improving and moving further away from the stereotypes of confrontation, and Russia intends "to continue its search for an acceptable solution" to the question of a peace treaty with Japan.

**11 February 2004** Vladimir Putin sends a message to US President George Bush, in which he expresses gratitude for condolences and solidarity in connection with the terrorist attack in Moscow on 6 February. He reviews Russo-US relations.

The head of the Russian presidential administration, Dmitriy Medvedev, is in the USA. He has held a number of meetings with the USA leadership, including, President Bush and Secretary of State Colin Powell.

**11 February 2004** Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Losyukov says Russia "will give priority to its own interests when selecting which option to follow in the construction of an oil pipeline system in East Siberia and will cooperate with those partners that are ready to take these interests into account ... Russia is interested in cooperating with a wide range of foreign partners in the development of East Siberia's oil and gas deposits and the delivery of Russian hydrocarbons to markets in all interested countries of the Asia-Pacific region". Losyukov singles out Japan, China and the USA as partners.

**11 February 2004** *Voyenno-Promyshlennyi Kur'yer* publishes a detailed article on Russo-Tajik military cooperation.

**12 February 2004** Belarus signs an additional contract for the delivery of 360m cubic metres of gas with Trans Nafta. This will cover supplies for 506 days. The Belarusian government has decided to pay off its debt to Russia for gas supplies with promissory notes. The Belarusian Finance Ministry has been authorized to issue promissory notes to a total of 48m dollars in 2004.

**12 February 2004** German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer visits Moscow for talks with the Russian leadership. He and Vladimir Putin discuss EU expansion, Iraq and Russo-German economic cooperation.

A Russian Chronology: January – March 2004

**12 February 2004** Igor Ivanov addresses the Duma Committee on International Affairs on Russian foreign policy. He says Moscow is not fully confident that the global anti-missile defence system being set up by the USA is not targeting Russia.

**13 February 2004** Russian-British political consultations take place at the MFA on security cooperation.

**13 February 2004** Igor Ivanov and Israeli Deputy Prime Minister Ehud Olmert hold talks in Moscow.

**13 February 2004** The chairman of the Duma committee on defence, Col-Gen Viktor Zavarzin, says although relations between Russia and NATO are developing productively on the whole, they "cannot be described as absolutely unclouded". He is critical of the position taken by certain NATO leaders towards the ratification of the adapted CFE Treaty.

**13 February 2004** Yusuf Kasimakhunov, a 38-year-old citizen of Uzbekistan, is detained in Moscow by the Federal Security Service (FSB) as a terrorist suspect. The Uzbek Interior Ministry issued an international arrest warrant for Yusuf Kasimakhunov in February 2000 for terrorist offences.

**14 February 2004** Vladimir Putin and George Bush discuss US-Russian bilateral relations, by telephone. Pierre-Richard Prosper, the US ambassador at large for war crimes issues says Moscow and Washington have reached an agreement on the fate of eight Russians held at the US Guantanamo military base in Cuba. Eight Russian Taliban were detained by US troops during the antiterrorist operation in Afghanistan in 2001.

**14 February 2004** Vladimir Putin receives Austrian President Thomas Klestil.

**14 February 2004** The Itera international group of companies announces the suspension of gas supplies to Azerbaijan. This is due to problems between Itera and Gazprom concerning the use of a network of pipelines for gas transit.

**14 February 2004** The MFA confirms that Russia will pull its armed forces out of Transdnestr in Moldova.

**14 February 2004** Viktor Zavarzin, chairman of the Duma defence committee, says more than 2,700 servicemen from the CIS are currently studying in Russian military institutions of higher education. Servicemen of the armed forces of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan are receiving military education in Russia on the basis of the 1998 intergovernmental agreement "On development of cooperation in the field of military personnel training".

**16 February 2004** Deputy Prime Minister Viktor Khristenko visits Vietnam.

**16 February 2004** *Ekho Moskvyy* radio reports that a major contract for delivery of a Russian aircraft-carrier and 16 fighter jets to India may fall through.

**16 February 2004** The MFA says it "welcomes the agreements on resuming talks under the aegis of the UN secretary-general reached in New York between the leaders of Cyprus's Greek and Turkish communities."

**16 February 2004** President Vladimir Putin has introduced three treaties with Ukraine for the Duma to ratify.

1. Russia-Ukraine state border treaty, signed on 28 January 2003 in Kiev.
2. Russia-Ukraine treaty on cooperation in the use of the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait, signed in the town of Kerch on 24 December 2003.
3. Agreement on the Formation of a Single Economic Space, signed on 19 September 2003 in Yalta. In addition to Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan are parties to the agreement.

**17 February 2004** Trans Nafta stops supplying gas to Belarus as its contract to do so has expired and no new one has been agreed.

**17 February 2004** Gennadiy Fadeyev, president of the Russian Railways company, says a feasibility study of the project to build the Trans-Korea Railway has been carried out. The places of possible links of the South and North Korean railways have been chosen and agreed. The three sides - Russia, the Republic of Korea and the DPRK - are trying to set up an international concern to upgrade and exploit the railway.

**17 February 2004** Bulgarian foreign minister Solomon Pasi visits Moscow for talks.

**17 February 2004** Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Saltanov visits Syria.

**17 February 2004** Igor Ivanov says Russia "has addressed letters to European ministers and international human rights organization leaders in connection with the law on education issued in Latvia".

**18 February 2004** Heads of antiterrorist departments of security agencies and interior ministers of the CIS Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) meet in Moscow. They discuss fighting political and religious extremism.

**18 February 2004** The vice-president of Iran, Atomic Energy Organization of Iran head Gholamreza Aqazadeh, says that Iran is ready to sign a protocol on the return of spent nuclear fuel from Iran's Bushehr nuclear power plant to Russia when Atomic Energy Minister Aleksandr Rumyantsev visits Iran.

**18 February 2004** Deputy foreign minister Yury Fedotov says Moscow is expecting Russian companies to get greater access to restoration work in Iraq in the light of Washington's recent promises to review the conditions for foreign companies to take part in tenders for work in that country funded from the US budget. Fedotov says that Moscow still favours an international conference on Iraq.

**18 February 2004** Gazprom ceases the supply of gas to Belarus.

**18 February 2004** Deputy Prime Minister Boris Aleshin visits Brazil to take part in the work of the bilateral intergovernmental commission for trade, economic, scientific and technical cooperation.

**18 February 2004** The Duma ratifies the agreement on the regional antiterrorist structure formed by member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

**18 February 2004** Russia's ambassador to Tanzania, Doku Zavgayev, is appointed a deputy foreign minister.

**18 February 2004** Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksander Losyukov says political relations between Russia and Japan "are developing rather well". He is addressing the Russian-Japanese assembly entitled "Dialogues for prosperity".

**19 February 2004** The Russian presidential adviser for economic issues Andrey Illarionov, blames the Belarusian government for problems over Russian gas supplies. The MFA says it views with bewilderment and disappointment the decision by Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka to recall the Belarusian ambassador to Russia, Uladzimir Hryhoryew, for consultations.

**19 February 2004** Vatican representative Cardinal Walter Kasper has talks with the representative of the External Relations Department of the Russian Orthodox Church, Metropolitan Kirill in Moscow.

**19 February 2004** Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Losyukov says the MFA is "cautiously optimistic" about the possibility of making progress at the new round of six-party talks on the Korean problem. He will head the Russian delegation at the new round of talks that will open in Beijing on 25 February.

**19 February 2004** The chairman of the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs, Arkadiy Volskiy, says Russia's accession to the WTO should not be linked to the ratification of the Kyoto protocol by Moscow.

**19 February 2004** The MFA issues a statement criticising Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka regarding the cutting off of gas supplies by Russia.

**19 February 2004** Igor Ivanov addresses OIC ambassadors in Moscow. "Russia's Muslims are an inalienable party of a multi-national, multi-faith Russia." He says

preparations are currently underway for Moscow to host a major conference on the role of Islam in Asia. A decision to set up an Islamic university has been taken.

**20 February 2004** Deputy Prime Minister Viktor Khristenko visits Belarus to discuss gas relations.

Igor Ivanov tells his Polish counterpart Wlodzimierz Cimoszewicz by telephone that Gazprom company has resumed in full gas supplies to Belarus and its transit to western Europe.

**20 February 2004** Vladimir Putin meets the chairman of the State Committee for Control Over the Illegal Trafficking of Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances, Viktor Cherkesov. Cherkesov says the narcotics flow from Afghanistan is still a major problem.

**21 February 2004** Vladimir Putin and Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski discuss energy cooperation, by telephone.

**22 February 2004** Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Aleksey II meets Cardinal Walter Kasper, head of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. Aleksey II says if a Greek Catholic Patriarchate is set up in Ukraine, this would put paid to good relations between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Vatican for decades.

**22 February 2004** The MFA condemns the suicide bombing in Jerusalem.

**23 February 2004** A Russian delegation headed by Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Losyukov arrives in Beijing to take part in the second round of six-party talks on the North Korean nuclear problem. The meeting opens on 25 February and will include North Korea, the USA, China, Russian, South Korea and Japan.

**23 February 2004** The chairman of the Federation Council International Affairs Committee, Mikhail Margelov, attends a conference in Berlin on Russia-EU relations. Duma international affairs committee chairman Konstantin Kosachev also attends the conference. He says EU expansion will inflict damage on Russia to the value of 150m euros annually.

**24 February 2004** Vladimir Chizhov, Russian deputy foreign minister, expresses concern over the EU demand that the existing Russian-EU Partnership Agreement be extended to include the EU's new members.

Duma deputy speaker Dmitriy Rogozin says the application of Russia-EU agreements between must not be automatically extended to the new EU members. He says it is necessary to take into account the discrimination against Russians in the Baltic republics. He proposes setting up a special standing commission at the Duma, which must take upon itself the issues of ensuring Russia's national interests in cooperation with the EU. On 23 February the European Union warned Russia of serious consequences if the agreement on partnership and

cooperation between Russia and the EU is not automatically extended over the new EU members.

**24 February 2004** Justice Minister Yuriy Chayka says the Council of Europe and Russia intend to set up a joint legal base in combating terrorism.

**24 February 2004** Turkish Foreign Minister and deputy prime minister Abdullah Gul visits Moscow for talks with Vladimir Putin. They discuss the fight against international terrorism. They also discuss military-technical cooperation and gas relations. Gul says Russia and Turkey have resolved all difficulties over the Blue Stream project.

**24 February 2004** Russia and the USA have bilateral consultations in Beijing over the North Korean nuclear problem.

**24 February 2004** The Pakistan-Russia Joint Working Group meets in Pakistan. They agree to enhance further bilateral relations and discuss anti-terrorist cooperation. Toheed Ahmad, additional foreign secretary led the Pakistan side and Anatoliy Safonov, deputy foreign minister of the Russian Federation, headed the Russian delegation.

**24 February 2004** The CIS military cooperation coordination headquarters states it is preparing a large-scale command post exercise codenamed Southern Shield of the Commonwealth 2004, the HQ spokesman. It will take place in Kazakhstan in April.

**24 February 2004** The Baltic Fleet command states it believes that NATO's E-3 AWACS aircraft that has been flying over the Baltic states since 23 February is carrying out reconnaissance missions.

**25 February 2004** The Federation Council ratifies the agreement on establishing an antiterrorist structure of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

**25 February 2004** Vladimir Putin appoints Igor Khalevinskiy Russia's plenipotentiary representative at the CIS Collective Security Treaty Organization.

**25 February 2004** Viktor Kalyuzhnyy, Russian deputy foreign minister, outlines Russian views on the Kerch Straits and use of the Sea of Azov by Russia and Ukraine.

**25 February 2004** The MFA issues a statement on Russo-Iranian cooperation.

**25 February 2004** North Korea, South Korea, Russia, China, the USA and Japan start the second round of the six-party talks on the nuclear problem on the Korean Peninsula in Beijing.

**26 February 2004** Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov describes as "a provocation" the arrest of three members of staff of Russian special services in Qatar who are suspected of an attempt on Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev's life.

**26 February 2004** Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Losyukov says North Korea has not revealed the details of its nuclear programme to the participants in the six-party talks in Beijing. Russia views North Korea's offer "to freeze" its nuclear programme as the first step towards liquidating it, and believes the demand that Pyongyang give up its nuclear programmes immediately is "unrealistic". Russia confirms that it would be prepared in principle to provide energy aid to Pyongyang in exchange for an agreement to give up its nuclear weapons programme.

**26 February 2004** Turkish Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul says public organisations that assist Chechnya are working in Turkey within the framework of the activities of official structures, more precisely through the Red Crescent. He says Turkey has halted fundraising for Chechen separatists. Gul calls on Russia to list the Kurdistan Workers' Party on the list of terrorist organizations in Russia.

**26 February 2004** The Russia-NATO Council meets. It discusses the narcotics trade in Afghanistan.

**27 February 2004** Presidential aide Sergey Yastrzhembskiy says Moscow is not involved in the death in Qatar of one of the Chechen separatists' leaders, Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, and is calling for the release of the Russian citizens accused by the Qatar authorities of killing him.

**27 February 2004** Head of the Russian delegation Aleksandr Losyukov says there is optimism about the talks on the North Korean nuclear programme being held in Beijing.

**27 February 2004** Konstantin Totskiy, the Russian Federation permanent representative in the North Atlantic Alliance, says Russian officers have been invited to take part in the work of the new NATO strategic command for transformation (Allied Command Transformation).

**27 February 2004** Acting prime minister Viktor Khristenko attends a session of the Eurasian Economic Community (EAEC) Interstate Council at the level of heads of government in Almaty.

**27 February 2004** Tatarstan oil company Tatneft purchases Turkey's Tupras petroleum refinery.

**28 February 2004** The FSB arrests two Qatari nationals in Moscow.

The MFA's special envoy for a Middle East settlement, Aleksandr Kalugin, denies that Russia had anything to do with the killing in Qatar of a leader of the Chechen separatists, Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev.

**28 February 2004** Aleksandr Losyukov, head of the Russian delegation at the six-party talks in Beijing, says the dialogue on the North Korea nuclear issue will continue on a permanent basis. A third round will take place in Beijing in the middle of 2004.

**28 February 2004** Viktor Zubkov, chairman of the Financial Monitoring Committee, leads a Russian delegation to a session of the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering (FATF) in Paris. He says increasingly strong action is being taken in Russia to identify individuals and companies involved in terrorist activities by financing it or laundering "dirty money".

**29 February 2004** A team of Russian lawyers arrives in Qatar to offer legal assistance to the Russians accused of assassinating Chechen rebel leader Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev.

**29 February 2004** Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Losyukov says Pyongyang has agreed to freeze its nuclear programme as part of the process of resolving the nuclear issue.

## ***March***

**1 March 2004** The MFA confirms that seven Russian citizens who were held at the US Guantanamo base have been handed over to Russia. They are charged under the Russian Criminal Code.

**2 March 2004** Swedish foreign minister Laila Freivalds visits Moscow for talks with Igor Ivanov on Russia-EU cooperation.

**2 March 2004** An article in *Izvestiya* discusses Russian military-technical cooperation with foreign states. In 2003 the volume of arms and military equipment exports passed the 5bn dollar mark for the first time and totalled in excess of 5.5bn.

**3 March 2004** Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says Russian soldiers will not under any circumstances end up in Iraq.

**3 March 2004** Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov arrives in Paris to take part in the Russian-French council on security matters.

**3 March 2004** Secretary of the Russian Security Council Vladimir Rushaylo visits Mongolia.

**3 March 2004** General Yuriy Baluyevskiy, first deputy chief of the General Staff, is interviewed in *Izvestiya*. He discusses CFE and NATO widening.

**4 March 2004** Defence minister Sergey Ivanov visits France.

**5 March 2004** The MFA refuses a visa to the former special rapporteur of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) on Chechnya Lord Judd.

**5 March 2004** New Russian Ambassador to Japan Aleksandr Losyukov says Moscow understands Japan's desire to safeguard its security against possible missile attack, but is critical of Japan's plans to take part, together with the USA, in developing a regional nonstrategic system of missile defence in northeast Asia.

Losyukov says there should be a linkage between issues to do with the signing of a Russo-Japanese peace treaty and the improvement and development of relations between the two nations as a whole, notably in trade and the economy. He also discusses energy cooperation.

**5 March 2004** Sergey Ivanov says Russia is ready to work together with the EU in joint peacekeeping and police operations. Ivanov says the CFE must be retained.

**5 March 2004** Itera Group is ready to sell 500m cu.m. of natural gas to Belarus in March at the old price of 46.68 dollars per 1,000 cu.m. Gazprom stopped supplying Belarus with gas on 1 January in an effort to extract a higher price and favourable conditions in its bid to acquire a stake in Beltransgaz.

**6 March 2004** Chairman of the Supreme State Council of the Union State of Russia and Belarus and Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka has signed an edict of the Supreme State Council appointing Pavel Borodin state secretary of the union state for a period of four years. The extension of Borodin's tenure gained the support of Vladimir Putin and the Cabinet of Ministers of the Union State of Russia and Belarus.

**7 March 2004** President of the Russian oil company LUKoil Vagit Alekperov and Saudi Minister of Oil and Mineral Resources Ali Bin-Ibrahim al-Nu'aymi sign a 40-year contract to explore and develop a natural gas field known as Contract Area A, in Riyadh. A joint venture, LUKoil Saudi Arabia Energy Ltd (Luksar), was set up with the state oil company Saudi Aramco, in which LUKoil holds an 80% stake.

**8 March 2004** The MFA welcomes the adoption of the law on state government of Iraq for the transitional period (interim constitution of Iraq).

**8 March 2004** A shipment of highly-enriched uranium - some 16 kg - leaves Libya for Russia, as part of Libya's actions to scrap its weapons of mass destruction programme.

**8 March 2004** NATO and Russia hold joint missile defence exercises in the American space centre in Colorado Springs.

**9 March 2004** Sergey Lavrov is appointed new foreign minister. Lavrov gives his first interview as foreign minister.

**9 March 2004** Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov says Western media reports alleging that Russian experts helped Iraq to create banned missiles "are groundless". He says the USSR did not help Iraq develop WMD.

**9 March 2004** Russian ambassador to Ukraine Viktor Chernomyrdin says Russia is losing Ukraine to the West.

**9 March 2004** The aircraft-carrying cruiser Admiral Gorshkov is given to India for subsequent modernization at the Sevmash yard in Severodvinsk.

**10 March 2004** Gazeksport says deliveries of Russian gas to Tbilisi will be halved from 15 March because of the debt owed by the Tbilgazi company to Gazeksport.

**10 March 2004** The MFA says the entry to Russia of Britain's member of the PACE Lord Judd has not been blocked.

**10 March 2004** Vladimir Putin has a telephone conversation with Iranian President Seyyed Mohammad Khatami.

**10 March 2004** Chairman of the Federation Council's international affairs committee, Mikhail Margelov, and the deputy head (deputy director-general for Euro Asia) of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, Mark Sofer, discuss the situation in the Middle East and bilateral relations.

**10 March 2004** Sergey Lavrov says the Russian side "expects a reaction from the Qatar authorities to our appeal", over the arrest of Russian citizens in Doha.

**10 March 2004** Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Chizhov and OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Rolf Ekeus meet in Moscow. They discuss the Russian minorities in Latvia and Estonia.

**11 March 2004** The Swiss prosecutor's office freezes the personal bank accounts of Mikhail Khodorkovskiy, Platon Lebedev, Leonid Nevzlin and others prominent in the Yukos affair.

**11 March 2004** Russian prime minister Mikhail Fradkov is appointed chairman of the Council of Ministers of the union state of Russia and Belarus.

**11 March 2004** Vladimir Putin telephones Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar to express condolences following the series of acts of terrorism which have claimed many lives in the Spanish capital.

**11 March 2004** Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov says Russia believes it is expedient to convene an international conference on Iraq. "In our view, this perspective should be borne in mind when we talk about setting up new bodies of power in Iraq which will be entrusted with the country's sovereignty on 30 June ... such a conference could ensure international legitimacy of the relevant Iraqi structures." He hopes for an expansion of Russia's business presence in Iraq. He says the work of the UN Human Rights Commission should acquire a "non-confrontational and less political nature".

**11 March 2004** Russian presidential aide Sergey Yastrzhembskiy visits Turkey to discuss anti-terrorist cooperation.

**11 March 2004** LUKoil and the Iraqi Oil Ministry sign a memorandum on understanding and cooperation. LUKoil president Vagit Alekperov meets Iraqi Oil Minister Ibrahim Muhammad Salih Bahr-al-Ulum in Baghdad.

**11 March 2004** The Russian Agency for Munitions says a recent statement by a US Deputy Under-Secretary for Defence, Lisa Bronson, that about 40 biological weapons facilities of the former Soviet Union are dangerous because of insufficient safety and monitoring is unfounded.

Member of the Duma Committee on Security Gennadiy Gudkov criticises Bronson's statement.

**12 March 2004** The MFA calls for restraint in the confrontation between the Georgian and Ajarian leaderships.

The Russian embassy to Georgia denies Georgian media reports that an additional contingent of Russian servicemen is being sent to Ajaria.

LUKoil president Vagit Alekperov says LUKoil is beginning new investment projects in Georgia in connection with the expansion of the retail market.

**12 March 2004** The talks between the Beltransgaz and Gazprom on the supply and transit of Russian gas in 2004 again fail to produce a result.

**12 March 2004** Secretary-General of the CIS Collective Security Treaty Organization Nikolay Bordyuzha says the 11 March blasts in Madrid, the 11 September terrorist attack in New York and terrorist sallies in Asia are links in one chain. "International terrorism is readjusting itself dramatically and is ready to deliver strike after strike in any region of the globe. In order to confront this evil, the global community must pool efforts and create an atmosphere of rejection of terrorism in any form or manifestation."

**13 March 2004** *Ekho Moskvy* reports that the two Russians in custody in Qatar on suspicion of the killing of former Chechen rebel leader Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev have confessed that they are members of the security services. The MFA fears they may have confessed under duress.

**13 March 2004** Ajarian leader Aslan Abashidze arrives in Moscow to discuss the situation in the republic.

**13 March 2004** Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov is interviewed on the MFA website. He says Russia is open to cooperation with the international community on "the Chechen issue". He says Chechnya will probably be touched upon at the next session of the UN Human Rights Commission which opens in Geneva on 15 March.

**13 March 2004** Russia's new ambassador to Japan, Aleksandr Losyukov, takes up his post.

**14 March 2004** The MFA says Russia is alarmed at the way the situation around Ajaria is developing and urges that it be resolved by peaceful means. It is concerned that the Georgian government may use force.

A representative of the Group of Russian Troops in the Transcaucasus, Col Vladimir Kuparadze, says the Russian servicemen deployed at the Batumi base will under no circumstances intervene in Georgia's internal affairs. He says the recent rotation of servicemen at the Batumi base had been agreed with the Georgian leadership.

**14 March 2004** The head of Vladimir Putin's election headquarters, Dmitriy Kozak, says certain trends in the USA also give cause for concern. He says this in response to criticism of the Russian elections by some top-ranking US officials.

**14 March 2004** The MFA says that the resolution on implementing the Non-Proliferation Safeguards Agreement in Iran "has a balanced nature on the whole". The resolution was passed on 13 March by the IAEA Board of Governors.

**15 March 2004** US President George Bush telephone to congratulate Vladimir Putin on being elected Russian president for a second term.

The head of the OSCE observer mission, Julian Peel Yates says: "The fact that the incumbent president abstained from traditional campaigning and the media provided no critical analysis does not allow us to regard the election as a thorough check of the state of democracy in Russia."

The head of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, Christian Strohal, said "the candidates were allowed to familiarize voters with their views ... however, this was offset by the fact that the state media showed an obvious bias in favour of the incumbent president and the authorities failed to take any appropriate steps to rectify this."

**15 March 2004** Russian Federation ambassador to Georgia Vladimir Chkhikvishvili and Georgian Deputy Foreign Minister Merab Antadze discuss the issues "connected with a rise in tension in the Ajarian Autonomous Republic" in Tbilisi.

Commander-in-Chief of Russia's Ground Troops Gen Nikolay Kormiltsev, who is also a deputy defence minister, says the Russian units stationed in Ajaria will not, and do not intend to, intervene in the dispute between the Ajarian and Georgian central authorities.

**15 March 2004** Russian-Chinese staff-level talks take place in Beijing. They focus on the entire range of problems relating to strategic stability and also the state of military cooperation between Moscow and Beijing and its prospects. The Russian side is represented by First Deputy Chief of Staff of the Russian Armed Forces Col-Gen Yuriy Baluyevskiy. He has a meeting with Chief of the General Staff of the People's Liberation Army Liang Guanglie, and will meet be received by National Defence Minister Cao Gangchuan on 16 March.

**15 March 2004** The MFA "firmly condemns the terrorist act in the Israeli town of Ashdod, offers its deep condolences to the families of victims and extends its sympathy to the injured". It calls for following the Road Map to reach an Israeli-Palestinian settlement.

**15 March 2004** The Russian delegation to the OSCE warns that the abolition of rules of consensus (the adoption of decisions on the basis of general agreement and without a formal vote) "threatens to bring about a deep crisis in the OSCE". The MFA states that: "Russia views consensus as a founding principle of the activity of a common European organization, and an irreplaceable mechanism for adopting decisions".

**16 March 2004** French President Jacques Chirac and German Federal Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, currently in a summit in Paris, telephone Vladimir Putin and jointly congratulate him on his electoral success. Russian-German-French cooperation and the future development of Russia's relations with the EU were discussed in the three-way conversation.

**16 March 2004** Deputy foreign affairs minister Sergey Razov visits Serbia.

**16 March 2004** Andrey Kokoshin, head of the Duma's CIS Affairs Committee, says the Georgian leadership and President Saakashvili in person should take responsibility for developments in the Georgian-Ajarian conflict zone. He thinks that Russia should act as a mediator to help resolve this problem.

Konstantin Kosachev, head of the Duma International Affairs Committee says:

I am completely certain that if Russia was really interested in the collapse of Georgia and the secession of several autonomous regions from Georgia, it would have happened a long time ago. Believe me, this is within Russia's power, given the mood in those autonomous regions. Only the consistent desire of the Russian government to preserve the territorial integrity of Georgia allows it to remain as a single state and not collapse into a series of - forgive me - feudal principalities.

Kosachev says that Russia will draw the attention of European organizations to the inadmissibility of holding commemorative events in honour of the SS legionnaires in Latvia, especially now that the republic is being admitted to the EU.

**16 March 2004** Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov signs a resolution approving and submitting for ratification an intergovernmental agreement between Russia and Ukraine aimed at settling claims that appeared in the aftermath of an air crash on 4 October 2001. The two sides signed the agreement on 26 December 2003. The accident, which left 78 people dead, took place during a military firing exercise carried out by the Ukrainian air defences on the Crimean Peninsula.

**16 March 2004** Russian Armed Forces Chief-of-Staff Anatoliy Kvashnin states that:

"On the suggestion of the Kyrgyz defence minister, supported by the Russian defence minister, the decision has been made to replace the Southern Shield of the Commonwealth 2004 command post exercise, scheduled for April, with the Frontier 2004 large-scale tactical exercise. In addition to armed forces of the CIS and the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the war games will involve representatives of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization."

Kvashnin is speaking at a session of the Committee of the Chiefs of Staff of the CIS and Collective Security Treaty Organization in Moscow.

"Frontier 2004 will have two stages and be held on the territory of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. It will involve units of the Collective Rapid Deployment Forces together with the Russian aviation stationed at the Kant airfield in Kyrgyzstan. Officials of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization will be invited as observers."

Kvashnin, who also chairs the CIS chiefs of staff committee, participates in opening the first exercise of the CIS Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) unified headquarters in Moscow. The CSTO unified headquarters became operational on 1 January 2004.

**17 March 2004** Foreign minister Sergey Lavrov issues a statement on foreign policy, at a meeting with journalists.

**17 March 2004** The secretary of the Russian Security Council, Igor Ivanov, meets his Georgian counterpart, Vano Merabishvili. They discuss the Ajarian crisis.

The headquarters of the Russian military force in the Transcaucasus region denies Georgian media reports about an exercise of the Russian military base No 12 that allegedly started at the Gonio training ground in Ajaria.

**17 March 2004** Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma visits Moscow. He and Vladimir Putin discuss the ratification of agreements on the Single Economic Space, and on the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait.

**17 March 2004** Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka meets Duma speaker Boris Gryzlov. Gryzlov is in Minsk to attend the 24th session of the parliamentary assembly of the union state of Russia and Belarus.

**17 March 2004** The chairman of the Federation Council international affairs committee, Mikhail Margelov, says the statement by Spanish Prime Minister-elect Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero on a complete withdrawal of the Spanish contingent from Iraq by 1 July shows that contradictions are growing within the antiterrorist coalition. He says the intentions of Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero "confirm the correctness of Russia's attitude towards the military interference of the USA and Great Britain in Iraq".

**17 March 2004** The head of the Federal Service for Nuclear Supervision, Andrey Malyshev, says the construction of the Bushehr nuclear power plant in Iran is facing organizational and financial difficulties.

**17 March 2004** Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov calls on the UN Commission on Human Rights, which meets for its annual session in Geneva, not to ignore the position of the Russian-speaking minority in Latvia and Estonia.

**17 March 2004** The secretary of the Russian Security Council, Igor Ivanov, says Russia supports China's territorial integrity and firmly speaks out against independence of Taiwan in any form. Ivanov meets the special envoy of the Chinese government, Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Dai Bingguo in Moscow.

**17 March 2004** Sergey Lavrov warns Japan against overly insisting on its principle of seeking the return of Russian-held disputed islands before concluding a bilateral peace treaty. Russia's new ambassador to Tokyo Aleksandr Losyukov says Japan should not expect Russia to make any "unilateral steps" at talks on the peace treaty.

Lavrov says Kosovo's Albanian leaders must show in practice that their declarations of readiness to create a multiethnic society in the autonomous region will be implemented. He says it is envisaged that contact groups will, jointly with the UN Security Council, assess every three months how these standards are being implemented. He notes the return of Serbs to their houses in Kosovo is practically non-existent. Lavrov notes that it had been decided to carry out overall analysis in May 2005 in order to "assess how decisions are being implemented". He says "the issue of Kosovo's status is not on the agenda at the moment".

**17 March 2004** Russian president's special envoy at talks on the Caspian Sea's legal status, deputy foreign minister Viktor Kalyuzhnyy, visits Azerbaijan. He says Russia is against demilitarizing the Caspian region at the current stage. "Now when the region is full of tension and American military bases have been deployed in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan it is wrong to talk about demilitarizing the Caspian region."

He says that if the Caspian states manage to agree on a coastal zone with territorial waters this will create borders in the sea which must be guarded. "By the way, I wanted to say that we have an interest in the US Great Lakes. I will soon ask my government to set up a Russian representative office for these lakes."

**18 March 2004** The separatist Chechen president Aslan Maskhadov thanks the EU for its recognition of Stalin's deportation of the Chechen people in 1944 as genocide and asks it to move a step further and recognize the ongoing Chechen war as genocide.

**18 March 2004** Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma has talks with Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov in Moscow.

**18 March 2004** The MFA calls for everything to be done to stop ethnic clashes in Kosovo. The MFA supports Belgrade's proposal that a UN Security Council meeting should be convened urgently on the situation in Kosovo.

**18 March 2004** The foreign minister's special envoy to the Middle East, ambassador at large Aleksandr Kalugin, meets Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmad Mahir al-Sayyid in Cairo to discuss the situation in the Middle East and efforts made to overcome the deadlock in the peaceful settlement in the region. The same range of issues is discussed at the talks between Kalugin and Egyptian President Husni Mubarak's political adviser, Usamah al-Baz.

**18 March 2004** A representative of the Russian Embassy in Doha meets two Russian nationals held in custody. The Qatari authorities accuse them of killing Chechen separatist Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev on 13 February.

**18 March 2004** Sergey Lavrov meets special representative of the Chinese government, Vice-Foreign Minister Dai Bingguo, in Moscow.

**18 March 2004** The Russian-American Senate-Federation Council interparliamentary working group meets in Moscow. Sergey Lavrov meets it at the Foreign Ministry.

**19 March 2004** The Duma adopts a statement "on the deterioration of the situation in the autonomous province of Kosovo-Metohija", in which it asks the president and government of the Russian Federation to take steps to stop the escalation of violence in the Balkans. It calls for a special 'plan for Kosovo'.

**19 March 2004** MinAtom says Russia is to accept nuclear fuel from Soviet-designed research reactors in a number of countries. Russia has already accepted fresh fuel and uranium from reactors in the former Yugoslavia, Romania, Bulgaria and Libya and still has to remove fuel from a further 21 research reactors in several countries.

**19 March 2004** Sergey Lavrov says the international community and the international organizations present in Kosovo - primarily KFOR - "must take urgent action to restore law and order in Kosovo, while Kosovo's Albanian majority must immediately put an end to violence". Lavrov has telephone talks with Serbia-Montenegro President Svetozar Marovic and Serbian Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica. A delegation from the Emergencies Ministry will in the next few days visit Serbia-Montenegro on instructions from Vladimir Putin. Minister Sergey Shoygu will lead the delegation. Possible steps will also be discussed to assist Serb refugees.

Lavrov urges steps to prevent any actions aimed at the creation of a monoethnic environment in Kosovo.

**20 March 2004** Vladimir Putin says that what is happening in Kosovo at present is "ethnic cleansing" and it is necessary to take a tough stance in defence of the Serbs. He says he is asking Security Council Secretary Igor Ivanov and Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to clearly formulate Russia's position on the issue.

The MFA says Russia is ready to collaborate with Western partners and the Security Council to normalize the situation in Kosovo as soon as possible.

The MFA calls for action against Albanian extremists in Kosovo. It says Russia is ready to cooperate with its partners in the Contact Group to resolve the situation in Kosovo.

**20 March 2004** Federation Council senators give a negative assessment of the US war against Iraq which began one year ago.

Iraqi Finance Minister Kamil al-Gaylani says Russian companies have a chance to take part in rebuilding Iraq's economy. He attends an international conference on Iraq's economic development in Beirut.

Russian participants (Zarubezhneft, Tatneft) in the UN's oil-for-food programme are affirming the lawfulness of contracts signed when the programme was in force.

**20 March 2004** The MOD says Russia is resuming the withdrawal of ammunition left behind by its former 14th army from Dniester Region. Preparations have begun for sending the first trainload of ammunition this year to Russia.

**20 March 2004** Interfax cites an MFA source as saying Moscow is concerned by Kiev's recent decision to allow Ukraine's territory to be used for NATO operations without agreement with Russia.

**21 March 2004** Sergey Lavrov is interviewed on TV. He discusses Kosovo and Iraq.

**22 March 2004** The MFA says the killing of the founder and spiritual leader of the Islamic Hamas movement, Ahmad Yasin, in an Israeli military operation is likely to cause a fresh wave of violence which could cancel out the efforts being made to revive the Palestinian-Israeli talks process.

Chairman of the Duma Committee on International Affairs Konstantin Kosachev says Russia should take the initiative of holding a meeting of the Quartet - the Russian Federation, the USA, the EU and the UN, co-sponsors in the Middle East settlement - in order to work out fast and decisive measures to avert the wave of violence which may be incited by the killing of Ahmad Yasin. Kosachev says Russia is destined to play a special role "because we, unlike the USA and the EU, enjoy similar trust among the highest Israeli leadership as well as the highest Palestinian leadership".

A Russian Chronology: January – March 2004

The head of the Russian Federation Council's foreign affairs committee, Mikhail Margelov, calls for Israel and the Palestinian National Authority to begin negotiations.

**22 March 2004** Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov says Russia has no plans for its military to take part in the multinational forces in Kosovo as part of the efforts to promote normalization in the province. He calls for all parties to comply with UNSC Resolution 1244.

**22 March 2004** Deputy Assistant Secretary Steven Pifer of the US Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs is interviewed in *Vremya Novostey*. He says Washington helped Qatar arrest the Russians suspected of being involved in the murder of Chechen separatist leader Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev. On Chechnya he says:

"First, we support Russia's territorial integrity and Chechnya has no unilateral right to leave Russia. Second, Russia has the right to defend itself from terrorists. However, our position differs from the Russian one: we don't believe that the conflict in Chechnya is linked exclusively to terrorism ... We condemn terrorism but for three years we have been saying how important it is to distinguish between terrorists and Chechens. We are concerned by violations of human rights during operations by Russian and Chechen security forces. The Russian government has to make sure that operations are conducted with the necessary discipline.

"We hoped that a leader with the trust of the majority of the Chechen people would be legitimately elected in the vote that took place in Chechnya in October of last year. However, at the last minute four or five main candidates either withdrew their candidacies or were struck off the ballot paper. So questions about Akhmat Kadyrov remain. We will be only too happy to discover that we are wrong and that Kadyrov finds a peaceful end to the tragic situation in Chechnya. So far he hadn't managed to do this."

**22 March 2004** Two Estonian diplomats have been declared persona non grata and are being expelled from Russia.

**22 March 2004** Chairman of the Duma Committee on International Affairs Konstantin Kosachev welcomes the reduction in tension over Ajaria. He says that the Kars Treaty of 1921, which stipulates Ajaria as being an autonomous republic within Georgia, is still in force and its provisions must be honoured.

**23 March 2004** Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov says Russia supports the proposal to adopt a statement by the UN Security Council chairman condemning the killing of Hamas spiritual leader Shaykh Ahmad Yasin.

The MFA says Russia is in favour of a direct dialogue between the Israelis and Palestinians. It says the "road map" shows the way to dialogue.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon congratulates Vladimir Putin on being re-elected Russian president. He says: "I expect that relations between Israel and Russia will strengthen."

**23 March 2004** Emergencies Minister Sergey Shoygu says Russian assistance to refugees from Kosovo "will not be of a one-off nature, but long term". "Russia regards it as one of its main tasks to halt the exodus of the non-Albanian population from Kosovo, and to build long-term relations with the government of Serbia-Montenegro in the humanitarian sphere."

**23 March 2004** The MFA criticises NATO's plans to deploy an air force and missile defence element in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania.

**23 March 2004** First Deputy Russian Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Trubnikov criticises the USA's use of the concept "axis of evil".

**23 March 2004** Yevgeny Primakov visits Georgia on a private visit.

**24 March 2004** Gazprom take a 34 per stake in Lithuanian gas company Lietuvos Dujos.

**24 March 2004** The Federation Council ratifies a protocol on the organization of joint antiterrorist operations in the countries of the CIS.

**24 March 2004** Russian-Chinese consultations on CIS and Central Asian issues begin in Beijing. The Russian side is headed by First Deputy Foreign Minister Valeriy Loshchinin.

**24 March 2004** Emergencies Minister Sergey Shoygu says KFOR and UN police have failed to fulfil their pledge to maintain peace and security in Kosovo in line with UN Security Council resolution No 1244.

The MFA says Russia insists that all the remaining potential for developing the Kosovo settlement process in the political channel should be used. NATO is blamed for the lack of stability in Kosovo.

Emergencies Minister Sergey Shoygu says Russia aid to Serbia for Kosovo is long-term.

**24 March 2004** Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov says Russia supports a resolution from the UN Human Rights Commission condemning the murder of Shaykh Ahmad Yasin but suggests the issue is looked at in a broader context. Fedotov says Russia will be putting forward its own resolution linking the problems of human rights and terrorism.

**24 March 2004** Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says the deployment of four NATO warplanes in the Baltics does not pose a threat to Russia's interests.

**25 March 2004** Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov says Russia wants a UN Security Council draft resolution condemning the assassination of Hamas spiritual leader Shaykh Ahmad Yasin to take into account the interests of all the members of the Security Council.

**26 March 2004** Deputy Foreign Minister Valeriy Loshchinin gives an interview on Russo-Chinese relations.

**26 March 2004** Deputy foreign minister Yury Fedotov calls on all sides in the Israeli-Palestinian dispute to follow the road map, and says the Quartet must play an important role. He says the possibility of sending international observers to the region is being considered. Russia's acting permanent representative to the UN, Gennadiy Gatilov, regrets the US blocked adoption of the UNSC resolution condemning the Israeli assassination of Hamas leader Shaykh Ahmad Yasin.

**26 March 2004** Sergey Lavrov visits Belarus.

**26 March 2004** Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says Russia is the only country helping the Serbs in Kosovo.

**26 March 2004** Economic Development and Trade minister German Gref says he is optimistic about settling trade problems with the EU that might arise when the EU enlarges. He is having talks with the EU on this issue in Brussels.

**27 March 2004** Vladimir Putin says Russia does not intend to interfere in Georgian-Ajarian relations. He says Ajaria is part of Georgia. He welcomes the stance on terrorism taken by new Georgian president Mikhail Saakashvili.

**27 March 2004** Sergey Lavrov meets his Kyrgyz counterpart Askar Aytmatov prior to the beginning of a session of the CIS foreign ministers in Minsk.

**27 March 2004** Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov instructs the Ministry of Industry and Energy to hold talks with Belarus and sign an agreement on matters to do with the ownership and exploitation of oil products pipeline transit enterprises located on the territory of the Belarusian side.

**27 March 2004** The Black Sea Fleet is to hold joint exercises with the Italian navy in the Tyrrhenian Sea later in 2004.

**27 March 2004** The Yukos joint-stock company and the Russian Railways joint-stock company have signed an agreement on volumes of oil shipments to China for the next three years.

**28 March 2004** Vladimir Putin gives an interview on Russia's relations with France and Germany. He will have bilateral summits with the French and German leaders in early April.

**29 March 2004** The MFA says Russia is forced to take very serious note of NATO's expansion. MFA spokesman Aleksandr Yakovenko says that "the most important factor that can improve European security is a radical change in the very nature of NATO and consistent implementation of the agreements on the new quality of relations between Russia and NATO, including the joint struggle against new and real threats and challenges". He says: "We will work to ensure the earliest possible accession of Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Slovenia to the adjusted Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. We can see no alternative to its enforcement."

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov criticizes NATO patrolling of the airspace of its new members, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia.

Deputy Russian Foreign Minister Vladimir Chizhov says Russia may take appropriate response measures, including the reconfiguration of its flank armed forces, should the presence of substantial combat forces near Russia's border pose a threat to its security. Chizhov is referring to the Baltic states joining NATO. Four NATO F-16 bombers and elements of an air defence system have been deployed in Lithuania. The chairman of the Federation Council international affairs committee, Mikhail Margelov, says "Moscow views NATO's eastward expansion as a lever to pressure Russia and influence the eastward policy of the expanding European Union."

Col-Gen Viktor Zavarzin, chairman of the Duma Defence Committee, says Russia should revise its military organizational development plans taking into account the strengthening of NATO positions in the Baltic countries. He says defence spending should increase.

MFA spokesman Aleksandr Yakovenko says NATO should find new ways to combat terrorism and strengthen security in Europe, instead of sending its planes to the Baltics. He is interviewed on Russian TV.

Konstantin Kosachev, chairman of the Duma International Affairs Committee, says the Duma intends to recommend to the Russian president that a special sitting of the Security Council consider the question of changing the military balance on the country's borders following NATO's expansion.

Konstantin Kosachev says Russia should withdraw its military bases from Akhalkalaki and Batumi in Georgia. He says that Russia should not automatically ratify the protocol to the Russia-EU agreement on the accession of 10 new states to the European Union.

**29 March 2004** The MFA condemns the terrorist acts in Uzbekistan.

**29 March 2004** The Russian ambassador to Ukraine, Viktor Chernomyrdin, expresses disapproval of the visit of George Soros to Ukraine.

**30 March 2004** The MFA says that Moscow regards NATO's decision to patrol the borders of a number of Baltic states with alliance aircraft as superfluous and incomprehensible.

Andrey Kokoshin, the chairman of the Russian Duma committee for CIS affairs and ties with compatriots, says: "We must not calmly accept NATO expansion. We must continue to state our positions and to modify relations with NATO countries." He says that NATO widening narrows political space for Russia and that is followed by a narrowing of economic space. "They are simply taking advantage of our weakness and squeezing us out of regions that were traditionally our spheres of interest." He says NATO expansion "is leading to a weakening of joint efforts in the fight against terrorism and the nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction."

Baltic Fleet commander Vladimir Valuyev says the Baltic states' accession to NATO is more of a political and demonstrative nature, and does not have any serious military significance. However he says the Baltic Fleet will strengthen various forces of combat patrol in response to the presence in the Baltic states of foreign subunits from other NATO members.

**30 March 2004** Deputy foreign minister Vladimir Chizhov gives a detailed interview to Interfax about Russia's relations with NATO and the EU.

**30 March 2004** The MFA expels three Lithuanian diplomats.

**30 March 2004** Vladimir Putin talks on the telephone with Uzbek President Islam Karimov about stepping up cooperation on the antiterrorist front.

**30 March 2004** Russian gas company Trans Nafta and Belarusian gas distributor Beltranshaz sign an additional agreement on 500m cubic metres of gas being supplied to Belarus in April.

**30 March 2004** Georgian Defence Minister Gela Bezhuashvili visits Russia for talks on Russian military bases in Georgia. The Russian MOD offers to train 75 Georgian officers for free.

Gennadiy Gudkov, member of the Duma security committee, says that Georgian police on 16 March captured a Tbilisi-based military installation belonging to the Russian military force in Transcaucasus.

**30 March 2004** Chairman of the Federation Council foreign affairs committee Mikhail Margelov says the problem of Iraq's foreign debts can only be resolved in the context of Russian companies' involvement in major business projects in Iraq. "The protection of Russian business interests must play a key role in deciding our policies towards Iraq". Margelov says Russian companies "are prepared to launch several major projects in Iraq worth jointly up to 4bn dollars."

**30 March 2004** Albanian Deputy Foreign Minister Luan Hajdaraga visits Moscow for talks. Sergey Lavrov says he is "seriously concerned about the Serb population being squeezed out of Kosovo and also the actual inability of the international

forces, which are responsible for law and order in the region, to stand up to extremists."

The coordinator of the Duma group for relations with Serbia and Montenegro and the head of the economic policy committee, Valeriy Draganov, says Russia should play an active part in resolving the Kosovo problem.

**30 March 2004** MFA spokesman Aleksandr Yakovenko says Russia regards the assurances given by the US leadership regarding the presence of American troops in Central Asia as sufficient. "We have discussed the question of the USA's military presence in the region. We received a totally clear reply - the military presence will be defined by the period over which the antiterrorist operation in Afghanistan is carried out."

**30 March 2004** Deputy Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Trubnikov attends a meeting of the Russian-US bilateral working group on combating terrorism held in Washington. They discuss the issue of preventing terrorists from obtaining bacteriological and "dirty" nuclear bombs.

**31 March 2004** Finance Minister Aleksey Kudrin says plans to make the Russian rouble the sole legal tender in Belarus in 2005 have been put back for a year after the two sides were unable to agree on the compensation due to Belarus.

**31 March 2004** Tekhsnabeksport, the Russian company responsible for the sale of uranium, exported 688m dollars in uranium to the USA in 2003 under the HEU-LEU (high-enriched - low-enriched uranium) deal. In 2002, Russian exports under the HEU-LEU deal amounted to 738m dollars. In total, 200 tonnes of high-enriched uranium were recycled and exported to the USA as a nuclear fuel component for nuclear power plants, and 25,000 tonnes of natural uranium were re-imported to Russia from the USA. Since the implementation of the contract began in 1994, Russia has received more than 4bn dollars in foreign currency revenues. Under the 12bn-dollar Russian-American agreement intended for 20 years, Russia is to recycle 500 tonnes of weapons-grade uranium removed from about 20,000 nuclear warheads into commercial low-enriched uranium used as fuel at nuclear power plants.

**31 March 2004** Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says that Russia does not intend to join NATO and intends to develop ties with the alliance in the "20" format.

Deputy foreign minister Vladimir Chizhov says any actions on the part of the USA to expand its presence in other states, and in particular, in new NATO member countries, must proceed within the framework of international obligations taken on by the United States. He notes that the USA has significantly cut back on equipment and servicemen in Germany and has been forced to redeploy them to other countries such as Romania, Bulgaria, and Poland. He says that the USA has assured Russia that, in its plans for the presence of servicemen and equipment abroad, there are no grounds for Russia to be particularly concerned either in political or military terms.

Vladimir Yegorov, the governor of Kaliningrad, says the enlargement of NATO may have a negative impact on the international relations of Baltic region countries.

The Duma issues a statement expressing concern over the latest wave of NATO widening. There were 305 deputies in favour, 41 against and two abstentions. The draft statement was drawn up by three Duma committees - international affairs, defence and security.

Konstantin Kosachev, the chairman of the Duma's International Affairs Committee says:

Over the last 10 years the number of NATO bases in Europe has fallen from 65 to 20. In accordance with the CFE, NATO has cut a total of 17,000 pieces of conventional military equipment. NATO has reduced its tactical nuclear weapons in Europe by about 80%. The German army has reduced its manpower by half, the Polish army by about three-and-a-half times and the Czech army by four times. So, at this point, it seems to me that racking our brains and starting a fight with NATO would be premature and without justification.

First deputy chairman of the Duma International Affairs Committee Leonid Slutskiy says "NATO is preserving a military doctrine based on an offensive approach, and we are not quite satisfied with it ... NATO's unwillingness to facilitate the adoption of the CFE Treaty new member countries and deployment of its armed forces along Russian borders is raising concerns in Russia."

**31 March 2004** Col-Gen Viktor Zavarzin, chairman of the Duma Defence Committee days The General Staff should develop a number of efficient countermeasures in order to offset NATO superiority in Europe. He says: "It is high time the General Staff started thinking about working out deterrence means, including reinforcement of forces in the northwestern strategic direction."

**31 March 2004** Sergey Lavrov attends an international conference on Afghanistan in Berlin. He says Russia is "concerned about the threat posed for Afghanistan by a resurgence in the subversive activities of the Taleban and other extremist forces". He says the UN should play a key role in Afghanistan.

**31 March 2004** Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says that Russian military bases in Georgia will not be closed down for the moment, but that Russia is ready to hand over some military facilities to Georgia. He says the closing down of Russian bases in Georgia "is only possible once the appropriate infrastructure for them has been created in Russia and all obligations for the social protection of the Russian soldiers have been fulfilled." He is having talks with his Georgian counterpart Gela Bezhuashvili in Moscow.

**31 March 2004** Sergey Kirpichenko, a foreign ministry special envoy, visits Iraq. He gives verbal and written confirmation of invitations to several Iraqi ministers to come to Russia to discuss matters of mutual interest and particularly the development of mutually-beneficial cooperation.

**31 March 2004** The Director-General of the Federal Aerospace Agency Col-Gen Anatoliy Perminov says Russia and the USA can join efforts in preparing a manned flight to Mars.



### **Disclaimer**

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