

Russian Domestic Policy: A Chronology

January – March 2007

1 January 2007 The new united Krasnoyarsk Territory is formed. It unites the former Krasnoyarsk Territory with the Taymyr and Evenki autonomous areas. The new constituent part of the Russian Federation will only become fully effective from May 2007. Elections for a single Legislative Assembly for all three regions will take place on 15 April 2007.

3 January 2007 The Federal Service for Control over the Trafficking of Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances (FSKN) says it seized more than 90 tonnes of drugs in 2006.

4 January 2007 Presidential adviser Aslambek Aslakhonov outlines federal policy towards the Northern Caucasus in 2007.

5 January 2007 The head of the Federal Labour and Employment Service, Maksim Topilin, says unemployment in Russia has fallen from 1.8 million to 1.6 million people year on year.

5 January 2007 Federal Migration service head Konstantin Romodanovskiy says over 100,000 illegal migrants were deported from Russia in 2006. More than 100,000 illegal migrants were deported from Russia in January-September 2006, among them 15,000 Tajik, 15,000 Uzbek, 5,000 Georgian, 5,000 Kyrgyz and 5,000 Azeri nationals. Romodanovskiy says about 350-400,000 people are expected to obtain Russian citizenship in 2007. In 2005, 508,000 people, "most of whom lived in the former Soviet Union", became Russian citizens.

The head of the Federal Labour and Employment Service, Maksim Topilin, says the Russian authorities are planning to set a quota of six million legal foreign workers and to simplify the procedure for applying for work permits in order to encourage people to go legal. Topilin says that there are currently 1 million foreign workers working legally in Russia. Konstantin Romodanovskiy earlier said that the number of illegal labour migrants was around 10.2 million.

5 January 2007 The commander of Strategic Missile Troops, Col-Gen Nikolay Solovtsov, says that the RS-20 Voevoda ICBMs (the R-36M2 system, or Satan SS-18 in the Western classification) will remain in service for 10 more years.

6 January 2007 The commander of the Russian Federation Air Force radiotechnical troops, Anatoliy Boyarintsev, says a Unified Automated Radar System is to be built in Russia by 2010.

7 January 2007 The Border Guard Service of the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) will complete forming special purpose subunits at the most important sections of the state border in 2007, first and foremost in the North Caucasus.

10 January 2007 Deputy chairperson of the information and analytical centre Sova, Galina Kozhevnikova, says as many as 53 people were killed and 460 injured in racist attacks in Russia in 2006.

10 January 2007 The press service of the Russian Federal Agency for Industry (Rosprom) says over 130 fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters were assembled at Russian aircraft production plants in 2006.

11 January 2007 Vladimir Putin meets the Council for Promoting the Development of the Institutions of a Civil Society and Human Rights. He denies that NGOs are facing excessive restrictions.

11 January 2007 35-year-old banker Aleksey Frenkel is arrested on suspicion of being the man who ordered the murder of the first deputy chairman of the Central Bank, Andrey Kozlov on 13 September 2006.

11 January 2007 A presidential decree is issued "On improving state regulation of imports and exports of precious metals and stones into and out of Russia", envisaging the lifting of restrictions on exports of natural diamonds and precious metals from Russia.

12 January 2007 A second suspect is detained in connection with the murder of Andrey Kozlov. Her name is Liana Askerova.

15 January 2007 New immigration rules come into force in Russia. A labour quota is being introduced for the first time for citizens of CIS countries. In 2007 it amounts to 6 million people.

15 January 2007 The trial of former Atomic Energy Minister Yevgeniy Adamov begins. He faces charges of fraud and abuse of office.

15 January 2007 A public opinion poll by Bashkirova and Partners gives the following results to the question who would you vote for if an election to the State Duma were to be held today.

- Yedinaya Rossiya 36.1 per cent of all respondents and 58.4 per cent of those who intend to vote.
- CPRF 9.5 per cent of respondents, and 15.3 per cent of potential voters.
- LDPR 6.1 per cent of respondents and 9.9 per cent of potential voters
- A Just Russia 3.5 per cent and 5.7 per cent respectively.
- Yabloko and the Agrarian Party would get about 3 per cent, and the Union of Right Forces (SPS) 2 per cent.
- At the end of December, 17.6 per cent of respondents said they would not go to the polls at all. The number of those undecided about their preferences increased from 16 to 21 per cent.

15 January 2007 The National Information Service of the CRI (Chechen Republic of Ichkeria) issues a brief statement rejecting claims about the success of the Kremlin's amnesty for Chechen fighters.

15 January 2007 The Prosecutor-General's Office receives a new request from Britain asking for detectives investigating the murder of former FSB officer Aleksandr Litvinenko to be allowed to visit Moscow again.

16 January 2007 The operational headquarters of the National Antiterrorist Committee (NAC) reports receiving "information on a possibility of subversive terrorist attacks in public transport or the underground". The Moscow police tighten up security on the metro.

16 January 2007 Prosecutor-General Yuriy Chayka expresses support for the idea of creating a joint investigative committee in Russia which would combine investigative units of the FSB, Interior Ministry and the prosecutor's office.

16 January 2007 Gazprom's board of directors approves an investment programme for 2007 worth over R529 billion.

16 January 2007 The MOD Public Council holds its first meeting. It aims to counter bullying and bring order to the armed forces. Sergey Ivanov addresses the meeting. He praises ethnic harmony in the armed forces, and says conscription will remain. He says 554 military servicemen of the Russian armed forces died in the line of duty in 2006.

17 January 2007 A VTsIOM poll gives the following results.

Vladimir Putin has the confidence of 54 per cent of Russians.

He is followed by:

First Deputy Prime Minister Dmitriy Medvedev (19 per cent)

Emergencies Minister Sergey Shoygu (14 per cent)

Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov (12 per cent)

Duma nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy (10 per cent).

17 January 2007 Security is stepped up in Russia following reports of possible terrorist attacks. By order of the head of the National Antiterrorist Committee, Nikolay Patrushev, all designated departments are put on heightened alert.

17 January 2007 The Prosecutor-General's Office charges banker Aleksey Frenkel with organizing the murder of Andrey Kozlov.

17 January 2007 Deputy chairman of Gazprom and director-general of Gazprom Export Aleksandr Medvedev says the total volume of Gazprom Export's hard currency proceeds from gas exports in 2006 amounted to 39 billion dollars, including 37.2 billion dollars from exports to the far abroad. In 2006 Gazprom Export exported 151.7 billion cu.m. of Gazprom's gas. Taking into account other sources of gas, Gazprom Export exported 155.6 billion cu.m. to the far abroad in 2006.

17 January 2007 The first deputy prime minister, Dmitriy Medvedev, says the situation that has developed in Chechnya's socioeconomic sphere over the past year gives grounds for moderate optimism.

Chechen Prime Minister Ramzan Kadyrov denies having any presidential ambitions.

18 January 2007 The Finance Ministry reports that the federal budget in 2006 ends up with a cash surplus of R1,999.39 billion (about 75.45 billion dollars), which amounts to 7.3 per cent of the GDP. Federal budget revenues in 2006 totalled R6,276.74 billion (236.86 billion dollars), which amounted to 101.7 per cent of the adjusted revenue schedule for 2006. Cash expenditures of the federal budget in 2006 totalled R4,277.35 billion (161.41 billion dollars), or 96.2 per cent of the adjusted schedule for 2006.

18 January 2007 Presidential adviser Igor Shuvalov calls the story about the murders of journalist Anna Politkovskaya and ex-FSB agent Aleksandr Litvinenko a "well-thought-out provocation" against Russia.

18 January 2007 A MOD report states that in 2006, 21,252 crimes and incidents were registered in the Russian Federation armed forces. 57 military personnel were killed and one went missing on the territory of Chechnya in 2006. In 2005, 105 were killed and two went missing in the Chechen republic. According to the MOD, 3,603 military personnel have been killed in Chechnya since 1999.

18 January 2007 The Air Force Commander-in-Chief Vladimir Mikhaylov says by 2020 Russia's air force fleet will be fully renovated. He says money for this purpose has already been set aside in the state armament programme. At present the Russian air force has 4,000 aircraft.

19 January 2007 A VTsIOM poll states that 25% would like to return to the Brezhnev era. 1 per cent of respondents would like to return to the time of Boris Yeltsin. 52 per cent prefer to live in contemporary Russia. In 2006 this figure was 39 per cent.

19 January 2007 The Duma adopts in the third and final reading a presidential law on reform of the Russian atomic energy industry. This document creates a new state holding, whose working name is Atomenergoprom.

19 January 2007 Vladimir Putin has signed a decree making Rosoboronexport the official monopoly exporter of Russia's military hardware. The decree is to cover all military items envisaged in the federal law on military technical cooperation between Russia and foreign countries.

19 January 2007 The chief of Russia's engineering troops, Col-Gen Nikolay Serdtsev, is interviewed in *Krasnaya Zvezda*.

20 January 2007 CPRF leader Gennadiy Zyuganov addresses a plenum of the Council of the Union of Communist Parties-CPSU. He says the CPRF aims to restore the USSR.

20 January 2007 The Russian Interior Ministry headquarters and Chechen Interior Ministry state that as a result of joint targeted operations conducted by Chechen security services and law-enforcers, 418 participants in illegal armed formations were detained and 60 killed in 2006. 456 former rebels gave themselves in to law enforcers between 17 July 2006 and 15 January 2007.

20 January 2007 The chairman of the State Duma Committee for the CIS and Relations with Compatriots, Andrey Kokoshin, says Russia proposes that a "special convention on the demilitarization of space be concluded, and opposes the introduction of weapons into space and the creation of threats to space objects".

21 January 2007 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov is interviewed on Rossiya TV.

23 January 2007 Rodina decides to rename A Just Russia - "Motherland" - People's Patriotic Union faction.

23 January 2007 The prime minister of Chechnya, Ramzan Kadyrov, denies reports that members of the Chechen police force may have been involved in the murder of journalist Anna Politkovskaya.

23 January 2007 The first deputy director of the Federal Service for Military-Technical Cooperation, Aleksandr Denisov, says Russian exporters of weapons and military hardware substantially expanded their order book in 2006. It now stands as 28 billion dollars.

23 January 2007 An article in *Krasnaya Zvezda* summarises Russia's new military doctrine.

24 January 2007 The draft bill on restricting mass demonstrations is withdrawn from the Duma.

24 January 2007 The Federation Council approves the draft bill on the relocation of the Russian Constitutional Court from Moscow to St Petersburg.

24 January 2007 A poll by VTsIOM indicates that 46 per cent of Russians think the country will achieve great power status in the next 15-20 years. The same poll found that 31 per cent of people do not think this will happen, while 12 per cent think Russia already is a great power.

24 January 2007 The president of the Chechen Republic, Alu Alkhanov, says he does not wish to continue in his post after his current term expires in 2008.

24 January 2007 The head of the FSB Border Guard Service, Vladimir Pronichev, says he is concerned about the migratory outflow of the population from the Russian Far East and the settlement of Chinese citizens in these regions. "In the period from 1989 to 2005, migratory losses in the Far East amounted to more than 830,000 people." He notes that currently more than 60 per cent of those moving in the Far East are citizens of the People's Republic of China.

25 January 2007 The minister of natural resources, Yuriy Trutnev, says conditions for access by foreign investors to mineral resources of the Russian shelf will be made tougher.

25 January 2007 The president of the Chechen Republic, Alu Alkhanov, says he is not going to stay in office for a second term but notes that the issue of his early resignation was currently not under discussion.

25 January 2007 Vladimir Putin says Russia is firmly against the deployment of weapons in space.

25 January 2007 Chief of the General Staff, Army Gen Yuriy Baluyevskiy, is interviewed in *Krasnaya Zvezda*. He says the numerical strength of the Russian armed forces as of 1 January 2007 was 1,130,900 servicemen. Forty-two military units have been switched to contract manning, 20 of them in 2006. The programme of the armed forces' partial transfer to contract manning should be completed by the end of 2007.

26 January 2007 The Federal State Statistics Service reports that the size of Russia's population fell by 520,700 (by 0.37 per cent) during the period from January to November 2006 and stood at 142.2m on 1 December 2006.

26 January 2007 The General Procuracy says that Andrey Lugovoy will not be extradited to Britain in connection with the death of Aleksandr Litvinenko.

26 January 2007 The head of the Federal Service for Ecological, Technological and Nuclear Monitoring (Rostekhnadzor), Konstantin Pulikovskiy, says not a single incident of disappearance of radioactive materials from nuclear installations or storage sites has been recorded since the creation of Rostekhnadzor three years ago.

26 January 2007 The government endorses the procedure for carrying out the migration registration of foreign citizens and stateless persons in Russia.

27 January 2007 Vladimir Putin signs a decree amending the list of strategic enterprises and strategic joint-stock companies. The list was originally endorsed by the head of state on 4 August 2004. Under the decree the following have been removed from the list: the Vympel state machine-building design bureau named after I. I. Toropov (Moscow); the Raduga state machine-building design bureau named after A. Ya. Bereznyak (Du billiona, Moscow Region); the Region state science and production enterprise (Moscow); the machine-building design bureau (Moscow); Krasnyy Gidropress (Taganrog, Rostov Region); the Iskra machine-building design bureau named after I. I. Kartukov (Moscow); the Omsk Avtomatika works; the Azovskiy optical-mechanical works production association (Rostov Region); and the Detal Urals design bureau (Kamensk-Uralskiy, Sverdlovsk Region).

29 January 2007 The military technical commission meets. Sergey Ivanov discusses the state of the Russian aviation industry.

29 January 2007 Investigators from the Interior Ministry (MVD) carry out a search of the offices of the oil company RussNeft. The president of the company, Mikhail Gutseriyev, has been questioned as a witness. Tax evasion is suspected.

29 January 2007 The Memorial and Demos human rights centres claim that between 3,000 and 5,000 people have gone missing during the course of the second military campaign in Chechnya.

29 January 2007 The government sets the aviation industry a target: to win 12 per cent of the world's civil aircraft manufacturing market within eight years.

30 January 2007 Yuriy Baluyevskiy, Chief of the General Staff and First Deputy Minister of Defence sets out his vision of Russian national interest in *Vremya Novostey*.

The deputy secretary of the Security Council, Col-Gen Valentin Sobolev, is interviewed in *Indeks Bezopasnosti* on terrorism.

30 January 2007 FMS Director Konstantin Romodanovskiy outlines migration policy priorities for 2007 and progress of the implementation of the state programme on returning compatriots at a meeting of the board of the Federal Migration Service.

30 January 2007 Kabarda-Balkaria's Interior Minister Yuriy Tomchak says that his republic has sufficient resources and means to counteract any manifestations of religious extremism and terrorism.

31 January 2007 Vladimir Putin discusses the work of the special services in 2006. The FSB holds its annual collegium.

31 January 2007 First Deputy Prime Minister Dmitriy Medvedev denies any dispute with Vladislav Surkov over the concept of sovereign democracy.

31 January 2007 Chairman of the Constitutional Court Valeriy Zorkin says he does not support the idea of Deputy Justice Minister Vladimir Kolesnikov to make amendments to the constitution to extend the presidential term.

31 January 2007 The government finalises the rules on the participation of foreign investors in the Russian enterprises of strategic significance

31 January 2007 Rosstat says Russia's Real Gross Domestic Product rose by 6.7 per cent in 2006. The nominal GDP in 2006, expressed in current prices, was R26,621.3 billion (about 1,002.3 billion dollars).

31 January 2007 The MOD's website says the MOD's expenditure in all federal budget sections in 2007 will total more than R860 billion, which is 23 per cent more than in 2006.

1 February 2007 Vladimir Putin gives a press conference broadcast live on TV. He says will not nominate any successor for the presidency.

As for the successors that you mentioned, I have spoken about this many times. There will be no successors. There will be candidates for the post of president of the Russian Federation. The job of the authorities is to ensure that there is a democratic method for the coverage of their election campaigns and for them to set out their election platforms, so that the citizens of the Russian Federation can make an informed choice.

February

1 February 2007 Dagestani President Mukhu Aliyev holds a joint session of the Security Council and the republican antiterrorist commission.

2 February 2007 The Moscow City Court sentences three men accused of carrying out acts of terrorism in the Moscow metro in 2004 to life imprisonment. The court found Maksim Panaryin, Tambiy Khubiyev and Murat Shavayev guilty of committing acts of terrorism (covered by article 205 of the Criminal Code).

2 February 2007 A government meeting decides that a new executive body, the Federal Agency for the Supply of Armaments, Military and Special Equipment, and Material Resources, which will serve all the power-wielding agencies, will be set up in Russia by 1 January 2008.

2 February 2007 The Federation Council approves amendments to the federal law "On foreign intelligence".

2 February 2007 The chairman of the Duma's committee on defence Viktor Zavarzin, says about R5,000 billion will be allocated to the implementation of the

State Armaments Programme during 2007-2015. Zavarzin says that about 200 formations and units of general-purpose forces will be rearmed under the programme, including 45 tank battalions, of which 22 get new types of machine; over 170 other battalions which will get modernized and new IFVs and APCs; five air defence brigades which will get the Iskander-M system; nine surface-to-air missile regiments which will get the S-400 system; and one surface-to-air missile regiment which will get the Pantsir-S missile/gun system. The air force will get 116 new and 408 modernized aircraft for frontal aviation, 156 new and 372 modernized helicopters, and 34 new and 159 modernized strategic bombers. Two multipurpose nuclear submarines and four diesel submarines, 12 warships and five patrol boats of various types will join the navy. Some 123 formations and units will be equipped with modern general-purpose communications equipment, while three armies will receive full sets of communications equipment. The number of constant-readiness formations and units will increase to 600 as a result.

The National Defence section of the federal budget for 2007 envisages spending of R821 billion. When other sections are added in, this brings total military-related spending to R883.5 billion.

Mikhail Fradkov states that a new structure will appear in the Cabinet of Ministers - the Federal Agency for the Supply of Armaments, Military and Special Equipment, and Material Resources.

5 February 2007 The Prosecutor-General's Office brings a new charge of money laundering against the former head of the Yukos oil company, Mikhail Khodorkovskiy.

5 February 2007 Vladimir Putin signs a decree on the creation of a Federal Agency for the Supply of Arms, Military and Special Equipment.

Vladimir Putin signs a decree "On the introduction of changes to the list of strategic enterprises and strategic joint-stock companies", which was approved by a decree from the Russian president on 4 August 2004.

5 February 2007 Vladimir Putin signs a decree "On the setting up of an inter-departmental working group to prepare proposals for implementing in the legislation of the Russian Federation the provisions of the UN Convention Against Corruption of 31 October 2003 and the Council of Europe's Criminal Law Convention on Corruption of 27 January 1999".

6 February 2007 Vladimir Putin meets the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs. He calls on the need to reduce dependency on raw materials exports:

The industry based on natural resources makes the country dependent on external markets and fluctuations of world prices. Russia has more than once seen how destructive and damaging such dependence can be for the national economy. Clearly, we have a single consolidated position on this issue. Undoubtedly, one of our main and common economic priorities is diversification of the Russian economy.

What measures can we take in this respect? First of all, we should create a developed system to process natural resources. In order to do this, we should substantially increase the number of processing facilities that produce high value-added products. We should not only learn how to export

crude oil, gas, ore and timber, but we also have to process natural resources within the country and deliver fully-developed and high-tech products to external markets.

He calls for more Russian investment abroad and to shift the energy balance towards coal.

6 February 2007 Maj-Gen Anatoliy Khryachkov is appointed military commissar of Moscow.

6 February 2007 Minister of Industry and Energy Viktor Khristenko says Russia will resolve the problem of "transit territory risks" by developing its own ways of exporting hydrocarbons. Khristenko says that production of oil in Russia is expected to reach 540m tonnes in 2015. In 2006 production amounted to 482m tonnes. Khristenko says that over the next few years Russia would build a major oil refinery to serve the Eastern Siberia - Pacific Ocean (ESPO) route.

6 February 2007 Chechen Prime Minister Ramzan Kadyrov is interviewed in *Profil*. He says will not stand for president of Chechnya when Alu Alkhanov steps down.

7 February 2007 Former Yukos head Mikhail Khodorkovskiy says the new charges against him are aimed at extending his time in prison.

7 February 2007 Defence minister Sergey Ivanov addresses the Duma on defence policy.

With every passing year, more funds are spent on the development of the armed forces, rather than on their maintenance or, to put it simply, on eating up funds. In 2006, nearly 44 per cent of national defence spending was allocated for the development (of the armed forces). By 2011 we plan to bring this figure up to 50 per cent by allocating the lion's share of funds for the procurement of arms and military hardware.

As you know, I have already mentioned this figure, this year already a total of R300 billion is earmarked in 2007 state defence spending for technical modernization. Of this sum, a total of R144 billion will be allocated for serial procurement of arms and military hardware alone. What are the benefits of this? In 2007 alone, (we will be able to) acquire 17 intercontinental ballistic missiles, four military spacecraft and the same amount of associated launch vehicles; to supply new and upgraded equipment to one long-range aviation squadron, six fixed-wing and six helicopter squadrons, seven armour and 13 motor-rifle battalions. In addition to this, new communications equipment and control systems, artillery pieces, anti-armour systems, airborne infantry fighting vehicles and other military vehicles will be procured; existing examples of such hardware will be revamped. As far as longer term plans are concerned, they are clearly outlined in the new state arms programme, adopted at the end of 2006. The programme is designed to cover the period through to 2015. A total of R5,000 billion is allocated for its implementation.

What are we planning under this programme, the part that we can say publicly? To put on combat duty with the Strategic Missile Troops tens of silo-launched (missile) systems and command points, and also to acquire more than 50 Topol-M mobile ground-based missile systems; to have in the Russian air force 50 long-range strategic bombers; to put into mass production, and gradually bring into service with the navy, Projects 955 and

955A strategic missile submarines; to create new-generation space-based systems for reconnaissance, communications, radio relaying, target indication, mapping and geodesy, and missile launch detection. In other words, all this equipment we plan to replace with new-generation hardware. Without that, of course, effective defence is impossible.

[Also in the plans is] to complete the construction of the launch pads for Angara and Soyuz-2 [boosters]. To fully restore the integrity of the periphery radar field of the missile attack warning system which is, I specifically stress this, confined to the territory of the Russian Federation; you understand what I am talking about here.

To increase the combat capability of aviation and air defence troops by 20 per cent. In addition, 40 armour, 97 motor-rifle and 50 airborne battalions of the ground troops will be completely re-equipped; five missile brigades will be equipped with the latest Iskander-M tactical missile systems, and two multiple rocket launcher regiments with modernized Uragan-1M multiple rocket launcher systems. More than 100,000 assorted vehicles will be procured for the army, and the navy will receive 31 ships. In all, under the new arms programme for the army and navy, about 45 per cent of hardware currently in operation will be replaced. And I am convinced that these plans are quite achievable.

Sergey Ivanov says that Russia is striving to create a joint command to control all military units in each region by 2010.

Some changes are taking place in the structure and the system of management of the armed forces. I am speaking about the experiment we are conducting in the Far East that aims to create a joint regional command to control all forces and units located in Far Eastern Military District. I mean that the fleet, the air force and the ground troops should be under joint command. This is a complicated task. I am not ready to speak about the results as yet. We will have definite results in 2008-10. In essence, I think that this path is strategically correct.

Ivanov says Russia reserves the right to deliver a pre-emptive strike in case of aggression, but it will not be a nuclear strike.

The commander-in-chief of the navy, Fleet Admiral Vladimir Masorin says that half of the navy's budget is spent on the development of the sea-based strategic nuclear forces.

8 February 2007 The secretary of Chechnya's Security Council, German Vok, resigns.

9 February 2007 The Office of the Prosecutor-General explains the nature of the new charges against the former head of Yukos, Mikhail Khodorkovskiy, and the former head of Menatep, Platon Lebedev. They are accused of stealing oil belonging to the companies Samaraneftegaz, Yuganskneftegaz and Tomskneft worth a combined total of more than R850 billion.

9 February 2007 Interior Minister Rashid Nurgaliyev promises to unfold a comprehensive fight against corruption in the highest echelons of power.

9 February 2007 The Motherland (Rodina) faction in the Duma is renamed A Just Russia - Motherland (People's Patriotic Union).

9 February 2007 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says Russia is developing systems to surpass any antimissile systems.

9 February 2007 The commander-in-chief of the navy, Fleet Adm Vladimir Masorin, says as of 2009, all personnel in service afloat in the Russian navy will be switched to serving under contract.

9 February 2007 Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, Colonel-General Arkadiy Yedelev, who is in charge of the operational headquarters in the North Caucasus, reported in *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye* that last year in the North Caucasus region 174 gangsters were neutralized and 1171 were detained.

12 February 2007 Chechen President Alu Alkhanov denies rumours of his resignation.

German Vok says that Prime Minister Ramzan Kadyrov is not fit to be president of Chechnya.

12 February 2007 The St Petersburg branch of the Soldiers' Mothers organization says that prostitution is taking place among MVD troops in St.Petersburg.

13 February 2007 FSB head Nikolay Patrushev says security services prevented about 300 terrorist attacks in Russia in 2006.

13 February 2007 The MOD and the Ministry of Natural Resources confirm the action plan for support of the Russian application for legal recognition of the external borders of the continental shelf in the Pacific and Arctic oceans in 2007-2010.

13 February 2007 The former FSB Colonel Mikhail Trepashkin claims in a letter to *Novoye Vremya* that the FSB set up a special group to physically eliminate Aleksandr Litvinenko back in 2002.

14 February 2007 The commander of the Siberian Military District, Army Gen Nikolay Makarov, says that the establishment of territorial military commands for the Far Eastern ("East"), Central Asian ("South") and West European ("West") salients will improve control of troops.

14-15 February 2007 Command and staff exercises are held in Karachay-Cherkessia.

15 February 2007 Vladimir Putin removes Sergey Ivanov from the post of defence minister and promotes him to the post of first deputy prime minister. Anatoly Serdyukov is appointed defence minister. He was head of the Federal Tax Service. Sergey Naryshkin is appointed deputy prime minister.

15 February 2007 Vladimir Putin signs a decree amending the list of strategic companies. The Vympel production association (Amursk, Khabarovsk Territory) has been removed from the list, while the Amursk cartridge plant Vympel has been added to the list.

15 February 2007 Vladimir Putin appoints the president of the Chechen Republic, Alu Alkhanov, as deputy minister of justice in the Russian government. He therefore steps down as president of Chechnya.

Putin appoints Chechen Prime Minister Ramzan Kadyrov as acting president of Chechnya.

15 February 2007 The commander-in-chief of the navy, Admiral Vladimir Masorin, says that in 20 years' time, all ships in Russia's fleet will be replaced by new ones.

16 February 2007 The leaders of the Narodnaya Party and the political party Spravedlivaya Rossiya, Gennadiy Gudkov and Sergey Mironov, sign an agreement on unification.

16 February 2007 Prosecutor for the Chechen Republic Valeriy Kuznetsov says the number of terrorist acts in Chechnya has gone down by nearly 60 per cent and the number of particularly serious crimes has gone down by more than 4 per cent in 2006.

17 February 2007 Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Losyukov says two mountain brigades, which are being created in Botlikh (Dagestan) and Zelenchukskaya (Karachay-Cherkessia) by the Defence Ministry "will be fully formed by 1 December 2007 and will immediately start performing their tasks."

18 February 2007 Sergey Ivanov says that he sees one of the main objectives in his new capacity as first deputy prime minister as diversification of the economy.

Ivanov says that modernization of the armed forces, including the provision of the most up-to-date weaponry, will continue along the lines already laid down. A major federal manning programme will be completed in 2007, and all units on permanent combat readiness will be manned by contract servicemen.

Ivanov says the second area of development is supplying the armed forces with modern weaponry. The third area of is combat training. The fourth area is resolving the social problems of servicemen.

The new defence minister, Anatoliy Serdyukov, states:

The main direction of development of the armed forces remains as before, that is, primarily, the social sphere, providing service personnel with accommodation, combat training, the modernization of the armed forces, moving toward a mixed service contract, which is already under way, and switching to a 12-month conscription period by 2008.

19 February 2007 Acting Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov says the Chechen Republic and the city of Groznyy will be fully restored before the end of 2008.

19 February 2007 The director of the Federal Service for Military-Technical Cooperation, Mikhail Dmitriyev, says Russia is regaining its positions on the arms markets of Middle East countries.

20 February 2007 First Deputy Prime Minister Sergey Ivanov says the exports of military-technical products added up to 6.4 billion dollars in 2006. "We have set a target of 7.5 billion dollars for 2007."

21 February 2007 The Russian Federation Council reappoints Vyacheslav Lebedev as chairman of the Supreme Court. Lebedev has headed the court since 1989.

21 February 2007 Rosstat says Russia's permanent population decreased by 561,200 (or 0.39 per cent) in 2006 to a total of 142,200,000 as of 1 January 2007. There were a total of 1,476,200 births and 2,165,700 deaths in Russia in 2006, which is respectively 18,800 more and 138,200 less, compared with the previous year's figures. Natural wastage - the difference in the number of deaths and births - amounted to 689,500 people. In 2005, the figure was 846,500.

21 February 2007 Bird flu is confirmed in Moscow and five districts in the Moscow Region.

21 February 2007 Police search the office of the British nongovernmental organization the Institute of War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) in Vladikavkaz.

21 February 2007 The Federation Council refuses to approve the treaty on the delimitation of powers between the federal centre and the Republic of Tatarstan.

21 February 2007 Gazprom head Aleksey Miller says that Gazprom is now rapidly expanding its gas mains infrastructure in the regions. "We have now reached a very good rate of increase for the number of homes connected to the gas network, on average, by four per cent (a year) over the country. We are planning to reach a level of 65 per cent by 2008. Thus, the rest of 35 per cent can be divided by four and we shall get the result we seek (the number of years needed to connect all towns and villages to the gas network)."

22 February 2007 Former Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov is summoned to the Prosecutor-General's Office to answer questions relating to the criminal case regarding Federation Council member Andrey Vavilov.

22 February 2007 Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov signs a decree on the assignment of duties to first deputy prime ministers Sergey Ivanov and Dmitriy Medvedev, as well as deputy prime ministers Aleksandr Zhukov and Sergey Naryshkin.

First Deputy Prime Minister Sergey Ivanov will be responsible for transport, science, communications and industry, including the military-industrial complex. First Deputy Prime Minister Dmitriy Medvedev will be responsible for national projects, social programmes and the management of natural resources.

Deputy Prime Minister Aleksandr Zhukov will be responsible for everything in the field of macroeconomics including legislation work, budget relations and migration policy.

Deputy Prime Minister Sergey Naryshkin will be responsible for foreign economic relations, first and foremost relations with the CIS, as well as continue to manage the government administration.

22 February 2007 The cabinet of ministers approves the draft of the new federal programme aimed at reducing the rate of socially significant diseases which noticeably affect the living standards and life expectancy in Russia. The programme will be funded to the tune of R76.5 billion over five years.

23 February 2007 Chechen rebel leader Dokka Umarov urges the Chechens to continue their fight against Russia. He is speaking on the anniversary of the 1944 deportation of the Chechens.

26 February 2007 Former prime minister Mikhail Kasyanov is questioned at the department for investigating especially important cases under the Prosecutor-General's Office.

26 February 2007 First Deputy Prime Minister Sergey Ivanov says Russia will create advanced 5th-generation air defence and missile defence systems.

26 February 2007 Spravedlivaya Rossiya holds its first congress. A Central Council is elected and political platform approved.

27 February 2007 Rosatom head Sergey Kiriyenko gives a report on the state of the nuclear power industry. He says that the proportional amount of electricity generated in the Russian Federation by nuclear power plants had increased from 15.8 per cent in 2005 to 17 per cent in 2006. He says that the Russian leadership had instructed the nuclear sector to increase the proportional amount of electricity generated by nuclear power plants to 25-30 per cent of the total.

27 February 2007 Almaz constructor general says the new S-400 Triumph air defence missile complex will be deployed on combat duty outside Moscow in mid-summer 2007.

27 February 2007 Acting Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov receives a delegation of the Council of Europe. Commissioner for human rights Thomas Hammarberg says that the situation in the republic has changed for the better with regard to construction.

A reconciliation commission starts working in the Chechen Republic. The head of the commission is a deputy of the People's Assembly of the Parliament of the Chechen Republic, Visriddin Sherdiyev.

The Chechen interior minister, Ruslan Alkhanov, says what is left of the illegal armed formations on Chechen territory cannot have any impact on the situation there.

28 February 2007 First Deputy Prime Minister Dmitriy Medvedev says the mortality rate in Russia is four times as high as in European Union member states. Medvedev says that life expectancy in Russia is 63 years. In the USA it is 12 years longer and in China, 5 years longer. He is meeting with industrialists and entrepreneurs and states that employers should be responsible for the health of employees and demographic problems as well as the state.

28 February 2007 Moscow City Court invalidates the ruling by the Khoroshevskiy district court suspending the proceedings of the Rosimushchestvo (State Property Committee) suit against former Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov on the return of Sosnovka-1 state country residence. On 29 January, the Khoroshevskiy court suspended the proceedings on the return of the state dacha occupied by Mikhail Kasyanov.

28 February 2007 Council of Europe Human Rights Commissioner Thomas Hammarberg says that inmates in Chechnya's remand centres are tortured.

28 February 2007 The board of directors of Gazprom approves the acquisition of a controlling interest in Sakhalin Energy, the operator of the Sakhalin-2 project.

March

1 March 2007 New passports are issued with extra security features.

1 March 2007 First Deputy Prime Minister Dmitriy Medvedev meets British Petroleum group chief executive Lord Browne and British Petroleum head of exploration and production Tony Hayward. They discuss the possibility of a Gazprom-BP joint venture.

1 March 2007 Deputy Economic Development and Trade Minister Vitaliy Savelyev says a total of R35 billion (around 1.3 billion dollars) is to be invested in Russia's Far East in 2008, compared with R4.5 billion in 2007.

1 March 2007 Vladimir Putin submits to the Chechen Republic's parliament the candidature of Ramzan Kadyrov for the presidency of Chechnya.

The participants in an international human rights conference adopt a resolution that includes a call for creating a commission of experts to evaluate the damage suffered in Chechnya during military campaigns.

Thomas Hammarberg, Council of Europe human rights commissioner, says he believes that illegal interrogation methods and torture are a routine practice in Chechnya.

2 March 2007 The Chechen parliament approves Ramzan Kadyrov as President of Chechnya.

2 March 2007 Military exercises take place in the North Caucasus Military District. This is a command post mobilization exercise being held in Rostov Region.

4 March 2007 The new Chechen president, Ramzan Kadyrov is interviewed on Vesti TV. He outlines his plans for Chechnya.

5 March 2007 First Deputy Prime Minister Dmitriy Medvedev gives an internet news conference. It is posted in real-time on three websites: www.voprosy.yandex.ru www.rost.ru and www.izvestia.ru

5 March 2007 Moscow Basmannyy District Court sentences the former heads of firms controlled by Yukos to 11 and 12 years' imprisonment for embezzling 13 billion dollars. Vladimir Pereverzin, former deputy director of the Yukos foreign debt directorate, and Vladimir Malakhovskiy, former director-general of the company Ratibor, were found guilty of theft of property in especially large amounts, committed by an organized group, as well as of the laundering of money by an organized group. Malakhovskiy was sentenced to 12 years, and Pereverzin to 11 years.

5 March 2007 The Taganskaya prosecutor's office launches a criminal investigation into the death of the *Kommersant* newspaper correspondent Ivan Safronov. On 2 March he fell out of a window in Moscow. It is claimed the death was suicide. However others claim that he received death threats in connection with a story he was working on about Russian arms supplies to Iran and Syria.

5 March 2007 Chechen rebel president Dokka Umarov calls on Muslims in the Caucasus to step up Jihad against Russia.

Chechen NGOs hold rally to demand that Chechen conscripts serve only in Chechnya.

5 March 2007 Rospotrebnadzor says the AIDS situation is worsening in Moscow.

5 March 2007 The commander of the 37th Air Army of the Supreme Strategic Command, Lt-Gen Igor Khvorov, says that all-types of long-range aircraft can carry out the job of suppressing US missile defence infrastructure in Europe.

6 March 2007 Union of Journalists general secretary Igor Yakovenko says that Ivan Safronov was probably murdered.

7 March 2007 Vladimir Putin says that Russia's unfavourable demographic situation still persists. "I should like to focus separately on the high mortality problem. As you know, mortality continues to be higher than the birth rate. On average, the country is losing over 700,000 people annually. Mortality among people of the working age group, 80 per cent of them men, remains a serious problem." He says also that a special state programme for the development of agriculture should be drawn up. He is speaking a meeting of the Council for National Projects.

7 March 2007 FSB head Nikolay Patrushev is interviewed in *Argumenty i Fakty*. He says an inter-agency IT system is to be set up as part of the National Antiterrorist Committee.

8 March 2007 A Tu-134 aircraft flying from Moscow lands at Groznyy airport. This is the first civilian flight since March 1998.

9 March 2007 Dead domestic poultry in Krasnogvardeyskiy District of Adygeya tests positive for the H5N1 bird flu virus.

9 March 2007 Vladimir Putin sends a message "On budget policy for 2008-2010" to the prime minister of Russia and to the chairmen of both chambers of the Federal Assembly.

9 March 2007 Law-enforcement agencies are carrying out an inspection at the Moscow office of PricewaterhouseCoopers, which in 2002-04 acted as auditor for Yukos.

9 March 2007 Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Yakovenko expresses disappointment with the work of the UN Human Rights Council one year on from its creation.

9 March 2007 The Foreign Ministry criticises the US State Department's human rights report with regard to its assessment of the situation in Russia.

9 March 2007 Vladimir Putin meets officers from the Defence Ministry, the FSB, the Interior Ministry and the Emergencies Ministry. He states:

We cannot fail to notice that attempts to resolve interstate disputes by force continue in the world; that the threats of interstate conflicts, terrorism, escalation of local conflicts and the spread of weapons of mass destruction

still exist. All this requires consistent improvement of the country's military structure, including maintaining high combat readiness of nuclear deterrent forces and facilities. Equipping the army and navy with up-to-date armaments is an absolute priority. The state armament programme until the year 2015 plans to allocate R5,000 billion for this purpose. A substantial part of these funds will go towards procuring advanced types of weapons and military hardware, towards the developing the potential of the country's science and its defence-industrial complex. I would like to stress that we aim to integrate the defence sector more actively with the civilian sector of the economy, above all with hi-tech industries.

The following promotions take place:

- First Deputy Defence Minister Aleksandr Belousov and Commander-in-Chief of the Ground Troops Aleksey Maslov, both promoted to the rank of army general.
- Navy Commander-in-Chief Vladimir Masorin, who was promoted to the rank of fleet admiral;
- Deputy Prosecutor-General of the Russian Federation and Chief Military Prosecutor Sergey Fridinskiy, promoted to the rank of justice colonel general;
- Deputy Interior Minister Lt-Gen Oleg Safonov, appointed recently [sic];
- Director of the Federal Migration Service Konstantin Romodanovskiy, promoted to the rank of police colonel general;
- Commander-in-Chief of the Interior Ministry's Internal Troops Nikolay Rogozhkin, promoted to the rank of army general;
- Internal Services Lt-Gen Aleksandr Chupriyan, appointed to the post of deputy head of the Emergencies Ministry;
- Deputy Chief of the FSB and Chief of Staff of the National Antiterrorist Committee Vladimir Bulavin, promoted to the rank of colonel general;
- Head of the FSB economic security service Aleksandr Bortnikov and chief of the FSB counterintelligence service Oleg Syromolotov, both promoted to the rank of army general;
- Col-Gen Sergey Ushakov, who was appointed to the post of first deputy director of the Federal Border Guard Service of the Russian Federation.

9 March 2007 First Deputy Prime Minister Sergey Ivanov says that as a result of a conference on the reform of Russia's shipbuilders, the decision has been taken to set up the Amalgamated Shipbuilding Corporation financial holding.

9 March 2007 Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov appoints Magomed Vakhayev as chairman of the republican Constitutional Court.

11 March 2007 Several regional elections take place.

12 March 2007 *Gazeta* reports that Vladimir Lukin, commissioner for human rights in the Russian Federation, has finished preparing his annual report "On the Human Rights Situation in Russia in 2006". Lukin will first familiarize President Vladimir Putin with his report in late March, followed by the Duma in April.

12 March 2007 The results of the referendum on the creation of Transbaykal Territory have show a strong majority in favour of it.

12 March 2007 Vladimir Putin signs a decree reducing the term for compulsory military service from two years to one year. The new regulations will come into force on 1 January 2008 and will not affect those who will be doing their military service in 2007.

The deputy chief of the General Staff, Col-Gen Vasiliy Smirnov, says the number of conscripts to be called up for army service during the spring 2007 campaign will not change and stay at around 130,000.

13 March 2007 Vladimir Putin nominates members of the new Central Electoral Commission. The current chairman of the CEC, Aleksandr Veshnyakov, was not included in the list of five names given by the president, or in the lists of nominations already submitted by the Duma and the Federation Council.

13 March 2007 Participants in the Dissenters' March 2007, which took place in St Petersburg on 3 March, submit a complaint to the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights Thomas Hammarberg. They are unhappy that the protest was broken up and that force was used against the demonstrators.

13 March 2007 Head of the FSB Nikolay Patrushev speaks at a meeting with journalists to mark the first anniversary of the creation of the National Antiterrorist Committee. He says as many as 300 acts of terrorism were prevented in Russia in 2006.

13 March 2007 The deputy head of Rosprom Viktor Kholstov states that so far Russia has destroyed 17.5 per cent or 7,007.5 tonnes of its category one chemical weapons. He is currently heading the Russian delegation at the 48th session of the executive council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, which opens in The Hague.

13 March 2007 The commander of the Russian Air Force, Gen Vladimir Mikhaylov, says Russia is preparing for the practical implementation of a new air defence system.

14 March 2007 First Deputy Prime Minister Sergey Ivanov says Russian defence industry enterprises will become profitable soon, in two or three years. He is speaking at a meeting of the military-industrial commission.

14 March 2007 FSB Director Nikolay Patrushev is interviewed in *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*.

14 March 2007 Mikhail Mashkovtsev is to step down as governor of Kamchatka Region. He will be appointed aide to the head of the presidential administration. He will be a member of the consultative council, which consists of former heads of regions.

14 March 2007 Interior Minister Rashid Nurgaliyev delivers a report on crime at the MVD's closed collegium. In 10 Russian regions organized criminal groups in

practice totally control the most profitable spheres of the economy and the local authorities do not offer appropriate resistance to them. Among these regions are Moscow, St Petersburg, Samara and several economically developed Siberian cities and regions. The amount of money in criminal circulation is comparable with the country's Gross Domestic Product.

14 March 2007 The chief of staff of the Russian air force Col-Gen Boris Cheltsov says the existing military doctrine of Russia, which was adopted seven years ago, needs to be revised.

15 March 2007 The head of the Federal Industry Agency, Boris Aleshin, says the Russian defence industry is facing restructuring. Federal state unitary enterprises (FGUPs) will be replaced by joint-stock companies.

16 March 2007 The chairman of the Federation Council's Committee on Security and Defence Issues, Viktor Ozerov, says the federal targeted programme for the development of the nuclear weapons complex for the period of 2007-2010 and up until 2015 has been drafted in Russia.

The commander of the troops of the Special-Purpose Command (KSPN), Col-Gen Yuriy Solovyev, says all forces and means of Russia's air and space defence must be concentrated in one pair of hands. Parts of the space forces and air force must be merged.

The chief of the general staff of the air force, Col-Gen Boris Cheltsov, say the level of funding of the Russian air force should be increased by 100 to 150 per cent and its strength by 20 per cent.

16 March 2007 Cheltsov is reported in *Krasnaya Zvezda* as saying that Russian missile and space defence systems (RKO) and air defence systems (PVO) should be integrated into a unified air-space-defence system.

16 March 2007 CPRF supporters rally in front of the Central Electoral Commission headquarters in Moscow. They are protesting against the elections in Dagestan.

16 March 2007 Deputy Prime Minister Sergey Ivanov at the collegium of Rosatom says that the Russian nuclear industry will start paying its own way by 2015 and will be able to build new power generation units with its own money without injections from the budget.

He says in Russia the rate of energy consumption is already 50 per cent higher than the figure envisaged in Russia's energy strategy till 2020. It is planned that as early as April a government session will consider an updated version of the energy strategy, which envisages a reduction in the share that gas has in the fuel balance of power generation and an increase in the share of nuclear, hydro and coal power generation. It is being planned that by 2010 their share should reach at least 18 per cent and by 2030 nuclear power should account for one-third of all the electricity produced in the country. He states:

We cannot put all our hopes on our hydrocarbons, their reserves are far from endless and unlimited. It is necessary to change the system that came into being back in the Soviet times, when the priority was traditionally clearly given to thermal power plants. The nuclear power rightfully constitutes the most universal and effective fuel.

16 March 2007 Russian Natural Resources Minister Yuriy Trutnev says if the licence of Russia Petroleum - a subsidiary of TNK-BP - is revoked, the Kovykta gas field will be auctioned off with foreigners barred from participation in it.

18 March 2007 Chairman of the Russian Council of Muftis Ravil Gaynutdin visit the Chechen Republic to meet President Ramzan Kadyrov.

19 March 2007 An aide to the Commander-in-Chief of the navy, Capt 1st rank Igor Dygalo says the potential of the Russian fleet of submarines is second only to that of the submarine forces of the US Navy.

19 March 2007 Vladimir Putin approves the composition of the commission on military-technical cooperation with foreign states.

19 March 2007 First Deputy Prime Minister Sergey Ivanov calls for expanding internet use in Russia. At present a mere 10 per cent of Russian citizens use it. He aims by 2010 approximately half of all Russians will have a PC and become Internet users. He says that by 2015 not a single Russian town or village must be without a telephone land line, access to the Internet and mobile phone networks. At present over 43,000 towns and villages in Russia are not connected to telephone land lines.

20 March 2007 Vladimir Putin instructs Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov to hold an investigation into the tragedies in Kemerovo Region and Krasnodar Territory, as well as the air crash in Samara, at the highest level.

20 March 2007 A new political structure, to be known as the People's Union (Narodnyy Soyuz) is to be set up on the basis of the People's Will party. Representatives of 14 organizations sign an agreement of intent to set up the new political party. The leader of People's Will, Duma deputy speaker Sergey Baburin, told journalists that the resolution to set up People's Union would be passed on 24 March at the congress of People's Will.

20 March 2007 Vladimir Putin says Russian arms exporters should boost the efficiency and quality of military cooperation with foreign countries.

In 2006, the total amount of military exports reached a record figure of 6.5 billion dollars. This is almost 20 per cent more than was planned. As in the previous years, particular attention was given to interaction with the partners in the CSTO and the CIS. In this field, tangible results were also achieved. Military exports to these countries grew by 100 per cent throughout last year. The CSTO intergovernmental commission on military-technical cooperation also intensified its work. Last year the backlog of orders for Russian military products grew significantly. It has by now already reached 30 billion dollars.

21 March 2007 Rosatom head Sergey Kiriyyenko says Russia has a set of programmes for all directions of the development of nuclear power engineering, and the state has allocated an unprecedented sum, over R1 trillion, for their implementation. Under this programme, from 2007 Rosatom should start building two nuclear energy generating units every year. After 2015, Rosatom should be building three new generating units a year and thinking about building four units a year. Only three nuclear energy generating units had been completed in Russia in the past 15 years.

22 March 2007 The Moscow prosecutor's office has demanded that the National Bolshevik Party be recognized as an extremist public organization and its activities be banned.

22 March 2007 Duma speaker and head of Yedinaya Rossiya Boris Gryzlov does not rule out that the party will put forward its own candidate for the post of president of the Russian Federation in the 2008 election.

22 March 2007 Head of the Moscow city directorate of the Federal Migration Service Fedor Karpovets says more than 240,000 foreign citizens have been registered with migration services in Moscow since 15 January.

22 March 2007 The government adopts as a basis a draft of the first three-year budget. Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov set a task for the Cabinet of Ministers of submitting it to the Duma by 30 April.

22 March 2007 Vladimir Putin signs the decree "On the open joint-stock company Amalgamated Shipbuilding Corporation".

22 March 2007 The Military-Industrial Commission under the government, at a meeting overseen by First Deputy Prime Minister Sergey Ivanov concludes that progress with the setting-up of integrated structures in the defence industry has been unsatisfactory. The plan for 2005-06 was to set up 21 defence-industry holdings. Just five have been set up, plus another five that were not part of the plan.

23 March 2007 A delegation of the Russian Council of Muftis meet Albert Kazharov, head of the presidential administration in Kabarda-Balkaria, in Nalchik. Ravil Gaynutdin chairman of the Council of Muftis says that a curriculum for Islamic schools in Russia has been agreed on and the Council of Muftis has endorsed it.

23 March 2007 The Supreme Court of the Russian Federation abolishes the Republican Party of Russia.

26 March 2007 Boris Boyarskov is appointed head of the Federal Service for Supervision in Mass Communications, Communications and Protected Heritage. Lt-Gen Aleksandr Denisov is appointed head of the Federal Agency for the Supply of Arms, Military and Special Equipment.

27 March 2007 Vladimir Churov is elected chairman of the Central Electoral Commission. Stanislav Vavilov is elected his deputy.

27 March 2007 FSB director and head of the National Antiterrorist Committee Nikolay Patrushev says there were 112 terrorist attacks in 2006 in Russia. In 2005 there were 257.

27 March 2007 The deputy prime minister of the Russian Federation, Aleksandr Zhukov, says under the draft federal budget for 2008-2010 over R150 billion is to be spent on the new nuclear energy development programme for 2009-2010.

27 March 2007 Vladimir Putin signs a decree "On changes to certain acts of the president of the Russian Federation on the governance of the state in the sphere of migration policy". The decree transfers certain powers of the Interior Ministry to the Federal Migration Service.

27 March 2007 A ROMIR opinion poll states that 38 per cent of the Russians believe that during his presidency Putin was most successful in raising Russia's international status.

Other tasks successfully resolved by Putin include raising living standards for citizens (24 per cent), preventing disintegration of the state (22 per cent), increasing national defence capability (19 per cent), ensuring economic growth (17 per cent), combating terrorism (14 per cent), popularizing a healthy lifestyle and supporting sports activities (14 per cent).

If presidential elections were held now, the results would be:

Dmitriy Medvedev 16 per cent
Sergey Ivanov 10 per cent
Vladimir Zhirinovskiy 9 per cent
Sergey Shoygu 8 per cent
Gennadiy Zyuganov 5 per cent.

27 March 2007 Russian Defence Minister Anatoliy Serdyukov says the equipment available to the troops of the North Caucasus Military District is not adequate for their assigned tasks. He orders an increase in the combat training of the units.

27 March 2007 The commander-in-chief of Interior Ministry Forces, Gen Nikolay Rogozhkin states that there are currently between 70 and 90 armed groups operating in Chechnya.

The Caucasus Times reports Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov as saying that in two or three months' time there will not be a single militant left in the republic. The Russian deputy interior minister and chief of the Regional Operational HQ, Gen Arkadiy Yedelev, puts the current available strength of the illegal armed formations at 450 men. He says they are merged into 37 groups.

28 March 2007 Aleksandr Brod, head of the Moscow Bureau for Human Rights says Russian human rights activists have decided to create their own central electoral commission.

28 March 2007 Mikhail Kasyanov confirms that he will run for president in 2008.

28 March 2007 The Economic Development and Trade Ministry prepares a programme for the development of the Far East and the Transbaykal region. The 358 billion rouble programme covers the period 2008-2013. The programme will provide financing for Yakutia, the Jewish Autonomous Area, Sakhalin Region, Chita Region, the Magadan Region, Kamchatka Region, Khabarovsk and Maritime Territories, Amur Region, Chukotka, the Agin-Buryat Autonomous Area, Buryatia, and the Koryak Autonomous Area. Projects to be launched under the programme include the construction of gas pipelines, motor and rail roads, social infrastructure, power lines, airport infrastructure, energy facilities, and communication lines.

28 March 2007 A magistrates court of Naberezhnyye Chelny hands down sentences ranging from 11 months to two years in prison to six members of the Hezb-e Tahrir extremist group.

28 March 2007 The commander-in-chief of the Ground Troops, Army Gen Aleksey Maslov, says the number of Ground Troops servicemen will change insignificantly over the next 10 years.

28 March 2007 Sovobodnaya Rossiya party holds an emergency congress. It renames itself Grazhdanskaya Sila.

29 March 2007 Sergey Ivanov is profiled in *Moskovskiy Komsomolets*.

29 March 2007 The Union of Right Forces leader Nikita Belykh says the URF has not yet made a decision about signing a charter on counteracting extremism.

29 March 2007 Vladimir Putin signs a decree "On the call-up of Russian Federation citizens to military service in April-June 2007 and the discharge from military service of citizens undergoing military service under call-up". Russian Federation citizens aged between 18 and 27 who are not in reserve and who are subject to call-up to military service under the federal law "On military duty and military service" are subject to call-up to military service from 1 April to 30 June 2007. They number 133,500 people.

30 March 2007 Daymokh website reports personnel shifts in the separatist Chechen government made by the president of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, Dokka Umarov on 7 March. The commander of the eastern front of the CRI armed forces, Suleyman Imurzayev (aka amir Khayrulla), is appointed as deputy prime minister in charge of socioeconomic issues; Tarkhan Gaziyevev as director of the national security service; Khuseyn Gakayev as interior minister; Said-Emin Dadayev as finance minister; Mansur Yevmirzayev as chairman of the supreme Shari'ah court.

30 March 2007 Sergey Mironov is re-elected as chairman of the Federation Council. He raises the issue of amending the constitution.

I would like to ask you to consider amending one of the articles of the Russian constitution saying the Russian president is elected for four years. I have spoken about this earlier and I would like to repeat it today, that it is a very short term for a country like Russia. I propose that we think about possibly amending this part of Article 81 (of the constitution) and increase the president's term in office to last five or maybe even seven years.

Part 3 of Article 81 says that one and the same person cannot hold the presidential office for more than two terms running. I suggest we consider whether it is time - in answer to multiple, even many millions of requests from our citizens - we reviewed this norm and say that one and the same person cannot hold the presidential post for more than three terms running.

Duma chairman Boris Gryzlov says he opposes changing the constitution.

I do not support the statements that are being made about changes to the constitution. I have said on more than one occasion that the parliamentary majority has been formed on the basis of the One Russia party. Our faction has two-thirds of seats in parliament today - so we have a constitutional parliamentary majority - and it will stand on guard of the existing constitution.

30 March 2007 First Deputy Prime Minister Sergey Ivanov says Russia's prestige in the world arena has risen substantially in recent years. He says this is due to its military and economic power. He says Russia intends to reduce its economic dependence on exports of oil and gas. "It is perfectly clear that the state has taken a strategic decision to reduce this dependence...There is only one way it can be reduced - by diversifying the economy."

