

Russian Foreign Policy: A Chronology

January – March 2007

1 January 2007 Gazprom signs with a Belarusian delegation a contract on gas deliveries and gas transit in 2007. The price of Russian gas for Belarus will be 100 dollars for 1,000 cu. m.

3 January 2007 The Russian ambassador at the UN, Vitaliy Churkin, says Russia "is not quite satisfied with the progress in the implementation by the Georgian authorities of the provisions of the UN Security Council Resolution 1716 on the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict".

3 January 2007 Gazprom confirms it is launching a project to supply gas to South Ossetia.

3 January 2007 The Defence Ministry does not confirm a number of media reports on fulfilling a contract for the delivery of Tor-M1 air defence missile systems to Iran.

3 January 2007 Sergey Mironov, the chairman of the Federation Council, criticises the US model of democracy.

3 January 2007 Belarus announces that it has imposed customs duty on Russian oil being pumped to Europe via Belarusian pipelines. The duty was introduced on 1 January.

4 January 2007 The Russian Trade Ministry criticises Belarus' decision to introduce duties on oil transit. The Kremlin says oil supplies to Europe will not be affected.

The official representative of the State Secretary of the Union of Russia and Belarus, Ivan Makushok, says believes that the conflict between Russia and Belarus over energy prices and duties has a political subtext and could undermine the building of a union state.

4 January 2007 Russian human rights ombudsman Vladimir Lukin says he opposes the death sentences passed on two of Saddam Husayn's closest associates. The former Iraqi dictator's half-brother (Barzan) Ibrahim al-Tikriti and former head of Iraq's supreme court (Awwad) Hamad al-Bandar were defendants in the same case as Husayn.

5 January 2007 Head of the Duma International Affairs Committee Konstantin Kosachev criticises the USA for introducing sanctions against three Russian companies - Rosoboronexport, Tula Instrument Building Design Bureau and the Kolomna Machine Building Design Bureau.

5 January 2007 The Russian deputy minister of economic development, Andrey Sharonov, says Moscow is not prepared to agree to pay customs duties for transit of oil through Belarusian territory.

5 January 2007 Azariqaz states that on 1 January, Russia suspended natural gas supplies to Azerbaijan because of the absence of a relevant contract. Azerbaijan did not conclude a contract with Gazprom as the latter unilaterally hiked the gas price

from 110 dollars to 235 dollars per 1,000 cu.m. last year, which does not suit Baku.

5 January 2007 Yevgeniy Anoshin, press secretary to co-chairman of the Russian-North Korean intergovernmental commission Konstantin Pulikovskiy says talks between the finance ministries of Russia and North Korea on the question of writing off Pyongyang's debt to Russia were held in Moscow at the end of December.

5 January 2007 The Foreign Ministry (MFA) says it welcomes the 4 January meeting between the head of the Palestinian National Authority, Mahmud Abbas, and the PNA prime minister, Isma'il Haniyah. The MFA also expresses concern over Israeli actions in Ramallah.

5 January 2007 Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Air Force Army General Vladimir Mikhaylov calls for cooperation between Russia and Europe in missile defence. He criticises US NMD deployments in Europe.

6 January 2007 Chief public health officer and consumer protection watchdog Gennadiy Onishchenko says Moldovan wines will soon be back on sale in Russia, but not in large quantities.

6 January 2007 The Economic Development and Trade Ministry demands that Belarus lift the customs duty introduced on the pumping of Russian oil to Europe since the beginning of 2007. Retaliatory measures are threatened.

Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says he is certain that economic and commercial rows between Russia and Belarus should not influence military and military-technical cooperation between the two countries.

6 January 2007 Transport Minister Igor Levitin says the Boeing company is offering Russia its services to develop joint production projects. He is visiting Washington.

Sergey Ivanov, deputy prime minister and defence minister, says the three Russian companies against which the USA imposed sanctions have not broken any international rules.

Since I head the export control commission, I am fully in a position to state that none of the three Russian companies has broken any international rules and commitments the Russian Federation assumed in respect of the nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction and missile technologies.

The sanctions imposed against the three Russian companies, first, have absolutely nothing to do with controls for the nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction and missile technologies. Second, the sanctions were imposed based on American legislation. It is also quite clear to me that this is far from the first time that the US administration has attempted to extend its legislation to the norms of international law...The US administration has of late been unhappy with the quantity of Russian arms and military hardware which has been sold and which has grown, as has our state defence order, for our own armed forces.

The MFA announces that the introduction of sanctions against a number of Russian legal entities and individuals is illegal and stressed that Russian companies will always act in full accordance with Russia's obligations regarding export controls.

Transport Minister Igor Levitin says Russia is ready to exchange information with the USA about flight passengers on a bilateral basis after amendments are introduced to the Russian law.

7 January 2007 Vladimir Putin appoints Aleksandr Losyukov, who has hitherto held the post of ambassador to Japan, as deputy foreign minister. Russia's new ambassador to Japan is Mikhail Belyy. At the same time, Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Alekseyev has been relieved of his post and appointed Russia's permanent representative at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. It is expected that Losyukov will head the Russian delegation at the six-party talks on the North Korean nuclear problem, replacing Aleksandr Alekseyev in this capacity.

8 January 2007 First Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Trade Andrey Sharonov says that following Belarus's decision to suspend the transit of Russian oil to European customers along the Druzhba oil pipeline, Russian oil suppliers will inform their Western partners of their inability to fulfil their contractual obligations.

We treat this situation as force majeure, as an instance of circumstances of irresistible force when the Republic of Belarus was the first to suspend the supply of Russian oil from its territory to the territory of third countries after which the Russian side stopped the supplies from its territory to Belarus because the transit turned out to be impossible.

We are of course worried by these developments. Russian oil suppliers will inform their Western partners of their inability - due to force majeure circumstances - to fulfil at the moment their contractual obligations to them.

Sharonov says that the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade does not rule out the possibility of Russia asking an international authority to make Belarus reimburse the losses incurred by Russia as a result of Belarus's unauthorized siphoning off of Russian oil from the Druzhba pipeline.

Transneft head Semen Vaynshtok says Belarus is illegally siphoning Russian oil from the Druzhba oil pipeline destined for Western Europe. He says since 6 January a total of 79,000 tonnes of oil has been illegally siphoned off.

A Belarusian delegation arrives in Moscow for talks about oil. The delegation is headed by First Deputy Economics Minister Uladzimir Naydunaw.

8 January 2007 Azerbaijan has suspended pumping oil via the Baku-Novorossiysk oil pipeline for three months since the beginning of 2007. At the same time, the transportation of the oil of the Azerbaijan International Operating Company (AIOC) via this pipeline is continuing.

9 January 2007 Vladimir Putin says losses to the Russian economy due to the recently signed gas agreements with Belarus will amount to 3.3 billion dollars, of which the state budget will lose 1.3 billion while Gazprom's loss will run at 2 billion dollars.

Minister of Economic Development and Trade German Gref has talks on the oil crisis with Belarusian Deputy Prime Minister Andrey Kabyakow. He says no progress has been made.

Industry and Energy Minister Viktor Khristenko confirms that Russia has stopped supplying oil via the Druzhba pipeline, which runs to Europe via Belarus. Khristenko says that on the morning of 9 January the Russian oil pipeline operator Transneft filed "relevant lawsuits" in court.

10 January 2007 Vladimir Putin and Alyaksandr Lukashenka discuss the Russian-Belarusian oil crisis. Belarus decides to abolish its transit duty on Russian oil.

Deputy Economic Development and Trade Minister Andrey Sharonov says Russia will diversify oil transport routes in a bid to avoid a repetition of the dispute with Belarus.

10 January 2007 The Duma issues a statement calling on the US Congress to step up cooperation between the parliaments of the two countries, lift the Jackson-Vanik amendment and uphold the "spirit of antiterrorist solidarity".

11 January 2007 Gazpromneft and the US company Chevron set up a joint venture, North Tayga Neftegaz, for the production of hydrocarbons in Yamal.

11 January 2007 The MFA says that the Russian embassy in Iraq was fired at twice, with the use of firearms, on 10 January.

11 January 2007 Duma speaker Boris Gryzlov says that Russia has supported and will support all steps taken by the USA in the fight against terrorism, but it does not welcome the deployment of an additional American military contingent in Iraq. The chairman of the Duma International Affairs Committee, Konstantin Kosachev, calls the United States' decision to send more troops to Iraq "a repetition and perpetuation of strategic mistakes".

11 January 2007 Transneft resumes oil deliveries to Europe through the Druzhba pipeline in full volume.

Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov has talks in Moscow with Belarusian counterpart Syarhey Sidorski in Moscow on oil transit

11 January 2007 Sergey Lavrov has talks with the chairman of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) Rene van der Linden.

11 January 2007 Konstantin Kosachev, chairman of the Duma International Affairs Committee, condemns the new law on war graves in Estonia.

11 January 2007 Vladimir Putin criticises the existence of the Guantanamo prison camp.

I hope we shall have no Guantanamo. For five years now the international public has been pointing to this camp, where people are held without any court or investigation. And those who get out of there and enter national judicial systems are found to be innocent. I have not heard of any guilty verdict so far. This is a sad situation.

12 January 2007 MFA spokesman Mikhail Kamynin states:

As before, it means staking on the use of force to resolve the Iraq problem, as seen from Washington's intention to send more troops to Iraq, albeit on a temporary basis. We believe the situation in Iraq can be settled in reality

through the establishment of dialogue to involve all groups in Iraq, with support from its neighbour states including Syria and Iran. Unfortunately, America's new strategy says nothing specific about that.

Sergey Lavrov says that the US commanders of the multinational force in Iraq have a responsibility to ensure that the Russian diplomatic mission there is reliably protected.

The MFA criticises the US attack on an Iranian consulate in Irbil, in Iraq.

12 January 2007 The Russian and Belarusian prime ministers Mikhail Fradkov and Syarhey Sidorski sign an agreement between Russia and Belarus on settling issues concerning trade and economic cooperation in the export of oil and petrochemicals.

12 January 2007 Russian and Iranian diplomats have discussions in Moscow on the "prospects for change in the military and political situation in the Middle East and North Africa". The Iranian side was represented by the Iranian Foreign Ministry's director-general for Middle East and North African Affairs, Ali Asghar Mohammadi Sijani. He was received by Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Saltanov.

12 January 2007 Vladimir Putin signs a decree appointing Aleksandr Zmeyerovskiy the president's permanent representative for international organizations based in Vienna. A separate decree relieves the previous envoy, Grigoriy Berdennikov, of the duties because of his moving to a new job.

13 January 2007 Russia and China have blocked a draft resolution on Burma at the UN Security Council. The document tabled for voting had been prepared by the USA and called on the Burmese military authorities to stop persecuting opposition and ethnic minorities, and to free political prisoners.

15 January 2007 The MFA condemns the execution in Iraq of two associates of the former president Saddam Hussein.

15 January 2007 The Prosecutor-General's Office will ask the British side to carry out a thorough investigation into the circumstances of the death of one of the founders of the Yukos company, Yuriy Golubev, who died in London on 8 January.

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.

15 January 2007 The deputy commander-in-chief of the Russian Air Force, Lt-Gen Aytech Bizhev, says an integrated regional air defence system of the union state of Russia and Belarus will be set up in the near future. It will be a prototype for similar coalition military structures in the Caucasus and Central Asia.

16 January 2007 Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says that Russia has delivered Tor-M1 systems to Iran under a contract signed earlier.

16 January 2007 Sergey Lavrov condemns the Estonian authorities' decision to dismantle the monument to Soviet liberators in Tallinn.

16 January 2007 Sergey Lavrov says any decision on the status of Kosovo has to suit both the Kosovo leadership and the Serbian authorities. He says no decision can be imposed on Kosovo.

16 January 2007 It is reported that Russian national Petr Makakin has gone missing in Iraq.

16 January 2007 The secretary-general of the CSTO Nikolay Bordyuzha says the plans to join NATO announced by the Georgian leadership and the alliance's favourable reaction to this are an alarming sign for regional security and stability.

16 January 2007 An agreement is signed between the Azarenerji company and the Russian Unified Energy Systems company on power exchange.

17 January 2007 The Duma issues a statement protesting at Estonia's approval of a law allowing the dismantling of monuments to Soviet soldiers fallen in the battle against fascism.

17 January 2007 The MFA welcomes Latvia's intention not to include an additional declaration permitting future territorial claims to Russia in a bilateral border treaty.

17 January 2007 Minister of Economic Development and Trade German Gref says Russia will apply bans on agricultural produce from Belarus if that country continues to use prohibited subsidies.

17 January 2007 The MFA advises Russian citizens not to visit Iraq.

17 January 2007 Russian presidential aide for economic issues Igor Shuvalov says Russia "has never taken, has never planned and will never take any deliberate actions to reduce energy supplies" (i.e. to foreign countries).

18 January 2007 Deputy Foreign Minister and Russia's special representative for the Middle East Aleksandr Saltanov says Moscow "expresses support for the efforts of Palestinian administration head Mahmud Abbas to form a coalition government". He meets Palestinian MP Nabil Shaath, member of the Fatah Central Committee.

18 January 2007 The MFA issues a statement on Russo-Georgian relations. The Russian leadership decides to return its ambassador to Georgia.

Georgian Foreign Minister Gela Bezhuashvili welcomes the Russian leadership decision to return its envoy to Tbilisi. He had been recalled in September 2006.

18 January 2007 Vladimir Putin meets foreign ambassadors. He states:

It is apparent that genuine energy security is only achievable through the joint responsibility of all participants in the energy chain. In saying this, I mean all forms of energy - oil, gas and nuclear energy.

For our part, with the aim of the unconditional implementation of this approach, we are taking measures to move relations in the energy sphere with all countries onto a transparent market foundation free of any political opportunism.

In normal trade and economic ties, including in the energy sphere, conditions for international trade that are common for all should and will be observed.

Russian Federation presidential aide Igor Shuvalov states that Russia will not be ratifying the European Energy Charter in its current form.

18 January 2007 The MFA states that allegations about "occupation" of Lithuania by the Soviet Union and "any claims based on such allegations ignore the legal, historical and political realities and consequently are completely groundless". This is in response to the Lithuanian parliaments demands for "compensation for the damages inflicted by the Soviet occupation".

18 January 2007 The European Court of Human Rights rules in favour of the Chitayevs in their lawsuit against Russia. This was the first court ruling in a series of complaints about torture in Chechnya filed with the Strasbourg court.

18 January 2007 Khamid Sugaipov is appointed as representative of the International Movement for the Decolonization of the Caucasus (IMDC) in Azerbaijan.

19 January 2007 Activists of Molodaya Gvardiya, the youth wing of Yedinaya Rossiya protest outside the Estonian embassy in Moscow against the demolition of the monument to the Soviet soldier-liberator in Estonia.

19 January 2007 Defence minister Sergey Ivanov dismisses as greatly exaggerated claims about the launch of a Chinese anti-satellite ballistic missile.

19 January 2007 The chairman of the Federation Council International Affairs Committee, Mikhail Margelov, is interviewed on Ekho Moskv radio on Russian foreign policy.

20 January 2007 Industry and Energy Minister Viktor Khristenko visits Algeria to discuss energy cooperation.

20 January 2007 Agriculture Minister Aleksey Gordeyev attends the East-West Agricultural Forum in Berlin. He says Russia is ready to cooperate with the EU in the field of bioenergetics.

20 January 2007 Chairman of the Duma Committee for CIS Affairs and Relations with Compatriots, former Secretary of the Security Council Andrey Kokoshin says if US air defence facilities are deployed in the Czech Republic and other former Warsaw Treaty Organization countries, Russia will find a fitting response to these plans. The former head of the Defence Ministry's fourth research institute, a senior researcher at the Institute of World Economy and International Relations, Maj-Gen Vladimir Dvorkin says that the possible deployment of US air defence elements on the territory of the Czech Republic and other Eastern European countries presents no threat to Russia's strategic deterrent potential.

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".

Mikhail Margelov, the chairman of the Federation Council international affairs committee says:

Since the moment the Americans started carrying out their global missile defence system, they have said no to any idea of, say, joint systems with

Russia aimed at seeking options of missile defence systems, which is regrettable. The Americans decided to act on their own here. American missile defence radars in Alaska are perhaps closer to the border with Russia than those which will be hosted by the Czech Republic.

The radars carry no real threat to Russia's security but they do not add to mutual trust. Russia isn't horrified at the presence of the US military anywhere. Another matter is the participation in strengthening mutual trust - it is here that questions arise, I repeat. I believe that the missiles - if they are aimed at defence - are no threat to us. Russia is not going to carry out nuclear missile strikes against the USA or any other NATO country.

21 January 2007 The heads of the Russian and DPRK delegations at the six-party talks on the Korean Peninsula nuclear problem, Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Losyukov and North Korean Vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye-gwan, meet in Moscow today.

21 January 2007 Vladimir Putin has talks with German Chancellor Angela Merkel in Sochi. Putin says on energy relations:

As for energy and the future and reliability of our cooperation, I would like to emphasize that all that Russia has been doing in recent years - the year before last, last year and this - is aimed at creating single, transparent rules and conditions for cooperation in Europe with our partners: to move to interacting with everyone on market principles.

If you remember the crisis around (oil) supplies to Ukraine, we, Russia, were constantly accused of politicizing the issue of energy - using some kind of energy weapon in our relations with our partners. Today no-one talks about using any kind of weapon regarding other countries. And we have always indicated that we intend to move to clear, market principles of relations with everyone without exception. And first and foremost our main consumers in Europe are interested in this. Our European consumers are primarily interested in there being clear, precise principles of interaction with transit states.

In former times, in the conditions of the Soviet Union, when our hydrocarbons were delivered throughout the territory of the Soviet Union, and to republics of the former Soviet Union, and throughout the territory of the Warsaw Pact countries, there was no problem. Now the situation has changed. We want to work with transit states, but - I stress once again - on clear principles of interaction that are common to everyone - common to everyone, without any political or any other kind of component.

So we say to everyone: yes to partnership, interaction, cooperation; no to politicization. We will build our relations with all our partners, with transit states, with hydrocarbon consumers, on equal, plain and transparent bases. That's the first point.

The second point is that, bearing in mind changes in the geopolitical situation, we will develop a transport network as actively as possible to have the ability to deliver our raw commodities to our main consumers. We will speed up work to lay the pipeline system to the Pacific Ocean coast. We will expand the possibilities for transporting hydrocarbons to the north, including to the northwest of Russia, so as to reduce our dependence on transit states. I repeat once again: we are going to build equal relations with

everyone, both transit countries and consumers, and that is in everyone's interests, everyone without exception - Russia, consumers and transit states. What happened at the end of last year was just another step in the direction of establishing market-based relations with everyone.

He also discusses Russia-EU relations and Kosovo. Putin says the following on Russo-German trade relations:

Trade turnover rose by 30 per cent and reached a new level: 40 billion dollars. The inflow of German investment to Russia was also quite tangible. Compared with the previous year, it rose by 50 per cent and exceeded 2 billion dollars. We are talking about inward investment, as for the total volume of accumulated investment, it exceeded 10 billion dollars.

22 January 2007 Sergey Lavrov visits the Serb Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina. He has talks with the prime minister of the Bosnian Serbs, Milorad Dodik.

22 January 2007 The MFA welcomes the meeting between the head of the Palestinian national administration Mahmud Abbas and Khalid Mish'al head of the Political Bureau of the Hamas Movement in Damascus. The MFA wants to see the establishment of a Palestinian coalition government which would create conditions for ending the blockade of the Palestinian territories and resuming full-scale donor aid to Palestine.

22 January 2007 The heads of the Russian and North Korean delegations at the six-party talks on the North Korean nuclear problem, Aleksandr Losyukov and Kim Kye-gwan, hold talks in Moscow.

23 January 2007 Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi has talks with Vladimir Putin in Sochi.

23 January 2007 Vladimir Putin makes the following comment on multipolarity:

There is a popular view which holds that monopoly is always wrong, except when it is one's own monopoly. After the collapse of the bipolar world and the end of the two confronting systems, some people developed an illusion that the world had become monopolar and that all the world problems could be quite easily resolved from one centre. As it turned out, this was not so. Such approaches lead to the crises growing in numbers while means of resolving them are getting more limited.

In these conditions, with Russia nearly written off, its economic and military means have been evidently growing and it is gradually emerging as a new competitor in the world. No matter that this new development is not yet so noticeable at first sight. This seems to me the main reason. That is, the unwillingness to consider Russia's legitimate interests and the wish to put her in a place set for her by somebody else. Russia will establish her place in the world by herself and will strive for a well-balanced and multipolar world. No-one is getting any worse for some criticism, after all. And we are grateful for it.

23 January 2007 Deputy prime minister and defence minister Sergey Ivanov visits India. Ivanov says he is against the deployment of offensive weapons in space.

23 January 2007 MFA denies that it is drawing up models for future forms of government in Georgia's breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

23 January 2007 The Russian PACE delegation submits a draft resolution, entitled "On attempts to revive Nazi ideology in Estonia".

23 January 2007 Rosoboronexport head Sergey Chemezov says Russia has completed its contractual obligations to Iran and "fully completed its Tor-M1 anti-aircraft system supply to Iran".

23 January 2007 Anatoly Mazurkevich, the head of the main international military cooperation directorate at the MOD, says Russia has refrained from delivering armoured personnel carriers to the Palestinian Authority and does not even intend to consider supplying light arms.

23 January 2007 Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Kislyak says Moscow does not see the need for the creation of a global missile defence system, elements of which will be located in Europe. "The USA's plans to develop a global missile defence system do not have our understanding because they do not originate from the interests of global security."

24 January 2007 Vladimir Putin has talks with his Armenian counterpart, President Robert Kocharyan, in Sochi.

24 January 2007 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says Russia shouldn't react to the actions of the USA, which has decided to deploy anti-missile defence systems in the Czech Republic and Poland.

24 January 2007 Sergey Lavrov visits India.

24 January 2007 Russian president's special representative on international cooperation against terrorism and trans-national organized crime, Anatoliy Safonov, says the only action capable of getting Iraq out of the crisis is an urgent start of an inter-Iraqi dialogue.

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 were citizens of the People's Republic of China.

25 January 2007 Vladimir Putin arrives at the Palam air base in Delhi (India) for a two day official visit.

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

25 January 2007 The Ministry for Economic Development and Trade says Russia and Georgia have not been able to reach an agreement on all controversial issues related to the Russian Federation's accession to the WTO. Georgia has withdrawn all its demands to the Russian Federation except one - the functioning of border and customs checkpoints in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

Georgia reports the arrest of a Russian national who tried to sell highly enriched uranium. Russian Federation citizen and resident of North Ossetia Oleg Khiltsagov

has been sentenced to eight years' deprivation of freedom for attempting to sell 100 grams of high-enriched uranium on Georgian territory.

25 January 2007 Duma speaker Boris Gryzlov says the lack of a free trade zone and a single emission centre are obstacles to the introduction by Russia and Belarus of a single currency. He is at a special sitting of the Duma Council devoted to trade and economic cooperation between the two states. He also says currently it is impossible to merge the two countries' energy grids.

25 January 2007 The Nashi movement affirms that it will continue to harass UK Ambassador Anthony Brenton.

26 January 2007 New agreements on gas with Ukraine and Belarus will prevent any future attempts by Kiev and Minsk to blackmail European countries.

26 January 2007 The MFA states that "the US plan to create an anti-missile defence system in Europe is a step in the wrong direction, with negative consequences for world security." The USA plans to deploy systems in Poland and the Czech Republic.

26 January 2007 Sergey Lavrov describes as unjustified the sanctions the USA has imposed against Russian companies which supplied the Tor-1 air defence systems to Iran.

26 January 2007 Minister Sergey Lavrov says the arrest in Georgia of a Russia citizen on charges of selling enriched uranium is a provocation.

The FSB's Border Service warns that militants in Pankisi may try to break through in the North Caucasus.

26 January 2007 Sergey Lavrov says he hopes that the six-party talks on the nuclear problem of the Korean peninsula will resume in the near future.

26 January 2007 The MFA expresses concern over the instability in Lebanon.

26 January 2007 Economic Development and Trade Minister German Gref says Russia hopes to join the WTO by the end of 2007. He says in 2000-06, Russian GDP has tripled in dollar terms.

26 January 2007 Sergey Lavrov says he believes that India will be able to meet its obligations in the area of developing peaceful use of the atom and place its peaceful programme under the supervision of the IAEA.

26 January 2007 Consultations take place in Madrid among representatives of mediators from Russia, Ukraine and the OSCE and also observers from the EU and the USA in the talks process on a Dniester settlement.

27 January 2007 Vladimir Putin says Russia may host the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in 2012. He is in Vladivostok discussing investment in the Russian Far East.

27 January 2007 Dmitry Medvedev addresses the World Economic Forum in Davos. He states:

Today I would like to speak not about one but three different countries: Russia in 2000, Russia today and Russia in the future. We are facing three main tasks. Solutions to these tasks are keys to a long-term growth of the Russian economy. What are these keys? I am going to name them. The first key is diversification. The second key is the creation of a modern infrastructure. The third key is investment in people.

The results of this year show that Russia has every opportunity to become number one in oil production in the world and overtake Saudi Arabia. We are the fourth largest producer of electricity and the first largest gas producer.

27 January 2007 Sergey Lavrov says he does not rule out the possibility of Russian peacekeepers taking part in operations in the Sudanese province of Darfur.

27 January 2007 Sergey Lavrov says as regards a new treaty on partnership and cooperation between the Russian Federation and the EU, "Russia needs it as much as the European Union".

Lavrov says he believes that Tehran and Damascus must be involved in the Middle East peace process.

Lavrov says the USA's unilateral sanctions against Iran are unproductive and are pushing Tehran away from the negotiating process.

28 January 2007 The secretary of the Security Council, Igor Ivanov, and the secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, Ali Larijani, have talks in Tehran. Vladimir Putin sends a message to the leadership of Iran. Ivanov says that the nuclear power plant at Bushehr will be completed on schedule. Ivanov says that the Iranian nuclear problem cannot be solved by force.

Iranian President Mahmud Ahmadinezhad meets Igor Ivanov in Tehran.

Igor Ivanov says that Russia believes that a concrete time schedule must be developed for the withdrawal of occupation troops from Iraq.

29 January 2007 The MFA condemns the suicide bombing in Eilat, Israel.

29 January 2007 Sergey Lavrov discusses the conflict between Hamas and Fatah in Palestine with Vladimir Putin. The MFA calls on both sides to exercise restraint.

29 January 2007 Iran's spiritual leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamene'i, meets Igor Ivanov and suggests the formation of an organization for cooperation in the gas sector, similar to the OPEC oil cartel.

Officials at the Economic Development and Trade Ministry reject the idea. The head of the Industry and Energy Ministry, Viktor Khristenko says there are no objective grounds for creating a gas cartel.

29 January 2007 The Prosecutor-General's Office requests from Georgia materials on the criminal case against Russian citizen Oleg Khintsagov, charged with smuggling radioactive materials.

29 January 2007 Vladimir Putin receives the president of the Republic of Guyana, Bharrat Jagdeo, in the Kremlin.

30 January 2007 Igor Ivanov calls for the establishment of a regional security system in the Persian Gulf.

Igor Ivanov reiterates that Russia will only supply nuclear materials for the Iranian nuclear power station at Bushehr on condition that spent nuclear fuel is returned to Russia. Ivanov also says that there must be strict IAEA control over the entire process, including delivery, loading and return of the nuclear fuel.

Igor Ivanov rejects claims that Russia is seeking to create a gas countries cartel.

We are holding active talks and will continue to hold talks with other countries that produce oil and gas, in order to coordinate our policy on the international energy arena, not against anyone's interests, but so that the interests of energy-producing countries are taken into account at the same level as the interests of energy-consuming countries should be taken into account.

Igor Ivanov has talks with his Saudi counterpart Prince Bandar Bin-Sultan.

30 January 2007 Sergey Yastrzhembskiy, presidential aide for relations with the European Union, is interviewed on Russian Vesti TV. He talks about the agenda for the May 2007 Russia-EU summit, energy supplies and the North European gas pipeline, Gazprom's aspirations in Europe, the European Energy Charter, and rumours that Russia could form a gas cartel with Algeria.

30 January 2007 Sa'd (Sa'd-al-Din) al-Hariri, the son of the late Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri and leader of the Lebanese parliamentary majority, arrives in Moscow for consultations with the Russian leadership.

31 January 2007 Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Losyukov says that Russia does not expect any specific agreements to be reached at the forthcoming six-party talks (North Korea, South Korea, USA, China and Japan) on the North Korean nuclear problem in Beijing on 8 February.

February

1 February 2007 Vladimir Putin says Russia will counter any European diversification of its energy supplies by diversifying its own export routes. He states:

And I see nothing wrong in the fact that our main consumers in Europe are talking of, or switching to, a diversification of their energy policy. This does not frighten us because we, in turn, are diversifying our supply routes to different consumers and to different markets.

Of course, they scare us a little bit with this because when we hear they are going to diversify their sources it means we must think where we shall market our products. So, as I say, we are building to the Far East, we intend to build to China and will indeed do so there, and in the Far East, in the Altay region, and, as you will know, we have laid a gas string along the bed of the Black Sea - Blue Stream. We are now thinking of laying a second one, with a possible subsequent exit into southern Europe or Central Europe. It could be Hungary or another Central European country. It might be Austria, or Italy, or Israel.

So we have no worries about the plans of our European partners. But, if you consider that we are actively developing cooperation with them to amalgamate assets - there are already examples of this kind: BASF and Gazprom, Gazprom and ENI - and that we are planning our cooperation for the long term, up to 2030 and 2035, it is assuming a more and more stable nature.

Vladimir Putin says that Russia is not going to form a cartel with Iran and other gas-producing countries but Russia is "already trying to coordinate our activities on the markets of third countries".

A gas OPEC is an interesting idea, we will think about it. However, for the initial stage, we agree with Iranian specialists, Iranian partners, and some other countries that extract large amounts of hydrocarbons, first of all gas, and supply them to the world markets. We are already trying to coordinate our activities on the markets of third countries and we intend to continue doing so in the future. We are not going to create some kind of a cartel, but I think it would be proper to coordinate our activities, taking into account the solution of the main task - the unconditional and reliable provision of the main consumers with energy resources.

1 February 2007 Vladimir Putin says Russia's answer to the deployment of US antimissile systems in Eastern Europe will be asymmetric but extremely effective, and could include the use of "hypersonic" systems.

Putin criticises the possibility of Finland joining NATO.

2 February 2007 Sergey Lavrov has talks with US President George W Bush in the USA.

2 February 2007 Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) secretary-general Nikolay Bordyuzha praises Russo-Belarusian military integration following war games between the two countries.

2 February 2007 The Quartet meets in Washington. Sergey Lavrov calls for greater Syrian involvement in the Middle East Peace Plan.

3 February 2007 Sergey Lavrov says that the expediency of convening a new international conference on the Middle East similar to the 1991 Madrid one "remains in the agenda".

Lavrov criticises US plans to deploy an ABM system in the Czech Republic and Poland.

3 February 2007 Sergey Lavrov says that US president George Bush has confirmed an agreement to do everything to speed up the multilateral negotiations on the Russian accession to the WTO in Geneva. In 2006 Russia completed all bilateral talks on WTO membership. The round of bilateral talks was finalized with the signing of the US-Russian protocol on the Russian accession to WTO during the APEC summit in Hanoi in November 2006.

Lavrov says that the USA has assured Russia that it does not intend to start a war against Iran. Lavrov also says that Russia and the USA would cooperate and try to make Iran return to the negotiating table and solve the nuclear issue.

Lavrov says Russia's and the USA's divergence on Kosovo "is of a principled nature".

Sergey Lavrov says that the USA may lift the Jackson-Vanik amendment in 2007.

4 February 2007 The head of the Russian Federation Council international affairs committee Mikhail Margelov says Palestine needs a viable government which could hold talks with Israel.

5 February 2007 Sergey Lavrov has talks with the EU in Moscow. The EU representatives are: German Foreign Minister (Frank-Walter Steinmeier), EU High Representative for EU Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana and EU Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy Benita Ferrero-Waldner. Lavrov states:

As for our priorities in 2007, we have outlined the beginning of talks on the new partnership agreement between Russia and the EU. We have also set ourselves the tasks of making further efforts to implement the four road maps, and quickly implementing the agreement on simplifying the visa regime and readmission, which is an important step towards a visa-free regime between our countries.

On energy, he states:

We do not reject the principles of the energy charter. Moreover, we are guided by these principles. What is unacceptable to us is some mechanisms which have been put forward, in particular those concerning transit and investments. Our partnership with the European Union therefore will be based on the firm foundation of the accords which were reached on the issues of energy security at the G8 summit in St Petersburg, in which both Russia and the European Union took part. And it's these principles, these accords that will define our cooperation. We see absolutely no need for any supranational bodies.

5 February 2007 Transneft approves the technical project to build an export oil pipeline bypassing Belarus.

6 February 2007 Industry and Energy Minister Viktor Khristenko says Russia is not discussing the establishment of any kind of cartels or alliances with gas-producing countries which may discriminate against the interests of consumers.

6 February 2007 The director of the MFA's foreign policy planning department, Aleksandr Kramarenko, says in the light of US plans to deploy a global missile defence system, Moscow has invited Washington to conclude a legally-binding agreement guaranteeing that the military potential of either country will not be used against the other.

Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says Russia opposes the deployment of any types of armaments in space.

6 February 2007 Sergey Lavrov has talks in Moscow with the secretary-general of the Arab League, Amr Moussa. He says: "Russia has reaffirmed its view that leading regional countries and Arab League states must be involved in the work of the quartet, and that meetings should be held with the participation of the conflicting parties."

6 February 2007 Vyacheslav Kovalenko, Russia's ambassador to Georgia, says Georgia's domestic political issues should not be connected to the procedure for Russia's accession to the WTO. He is referring to Georgia's demand that Russia legalize border and customs checkpoints on the Abkhazian and Ossetian stretches of the Russian-Georgian border during consultations on Russia's accession to the WTO.

6 February 2007 Economic Development and Trade Minister German Gref says Russia does not intend to retaliate against increased Belarusian transit tariffs on Russian oil.

6 February 2007 Russia's chief public health officer, Gennadiy Onishchenko, says meat imports from Poland were banned because the country has become a kind of "offshore zone" where all kinds of questionable produce arrive.

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. Last year production amounted to 482m tonnes. Khristenko says that over the next few years Russia will build a major oil refinery to serve the Eastern Siberia - Pacific Ocean (ESPO) route.

7 February 2007 Economic Development and Trade Minister German Gref says the main negotiations on Russia's accession to the WTO have been completed.

7 February 2007 Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says Russia reserves the right to deliver a pre-emptive strike in case of aggression, but it will not be a nuclear strike.

7 February 2007 Vladimir Putin receives the secretary-general of the Arab League, Amr Musa, at Novo-Ogarevo.

7 February 2007 Aleksandr Kramarenko, the director of the MFA's Foreign Policy Planning Department, says Russia's attitude to NATO will depend on the extent to which the alliance heeds the Russian Federation's security interests in practice, rather than just paying lip service to them. He says Russia cannot ignore:

the fact that NATO's military infrastructure is coming closer to Russia's borders, or the US plans to reconfigure its military presence in Europe - plans which will include not just the transfer of some military formations to Bulgaria and Romania, but also the creation of a third positional area for the global ABM system on the territory, it is thought, of the Czech Republic and Poland...Our attitude to NATO will depend on the extent to which the alliance heeds Russia's security interests in practice, rather than just paying lip service to them, on how effectively the tasks of stabilizing Afghanistan and dealing with the narcoterrorism threat stemming from that country are tackled.

He says many of Russia's western partners "are still attached to the illusions and prejudices of the Cold War era and cannot overcome the inertia of bloc approaches and confrontational policy".

8 February 2007 Israel's national infrastructures minister, Binyamin Ben-Eliezer, says Israel is planning to sign an agreement with Russia on gas supplies and build a gas pipeline by 2011. Israel is planning to get between 2 billion and 5 billion cubic metres of gas annually.

8 February 2007 Ayatollah Khamene'i's adviser Ali Akbar Velayati arrives in Moscow for talks with Sergey Ivanov and Secretary of the Security Council Igor Ivanov.

8 February 2007 An informal meeting of the Russia-NATO council takes place in Seville. Sergey Ivanov attends. He has talks with US Secretary of Defence Robert Gates.

8 February 2007 Vladimir Vasilyev, chairman of the Duma Security Committee states:

When military surveillance facilities appear near the borders of any country, to be followed by missile installations, this could only be perceived as a threat. It would be naive to count on Russia giving up its national interests. We are an independent state and we will draw up our policy and defend our interests as an independent state.

8 February 2007 British Secretary of State for Industry Alistair Darling visits Moscow.

8 February 2007 Six-party talks on the North Korean nuclear issue begin in Beijing.

8 February 2007 The chairman of the Duma's international affairs committee, Konstantin Kosachev, says the key to solving the North Korean nuclear problem lies in a direct dialogue between the USA and the DPRK.

Kosachev describes a remark by US Defence Secretary Robert Gates about the need to prepare for possible conflicts, including with Russia and China, as an unfortunate turn of phrase.

8 February 2007 The director of the security and disarmament department of the MFA, Anatoliy Antonov, accuses NATO member states of preventing the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) from coming into force and does not rule out leaving the treaty.

9 February 2007 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says Russia is developing systems to surpass any antimissile systems. "We are developing our own strategic systems which will have the capability to surpass any antimissile system." He says that a new US ABM system in Europe will create a new virtual Berlin Wall.

Ivanov says granting independence to Kosovo may have a chain reaction sparking similar processes across Europe. He says Russia will aid the ISAF in Afghanistan logistically but not send troops there.

Konstantin Kosachev says Russia might use its veto if the question of determining Kosovo's status is raised in a hasty manner at the UN Security Council. He meets the US secretary of state's special envoy for the status process in Kosovo, Frank Wisner.

9 February 2007 The MFA says Moscow welcomes the accords reached in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, by the Fatah and Hamas movements on the establishment of a Palestinian government of national unity.

The president's special representative for the Middle East and Russian deputy foreign minister, Aleksandr Saltanov, says Moscow considers that the quartet of international mediators in the Middle East (Russia, USA, UN, EU) should discuss the question of lifting the international blockade of the Palestinian territories, which is damaging the situation in the region.

10 February 2007 Vladimir Putin addresses the Munich Security Conference. He sharply criticises the USA.

10 February 2007 Vladimir Putin is interviewed on Al-Jazeera TV ahead of his trip to the Middle East.

10 February 2007 Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Losyukov, who leads the Russian delegation at the six-party talks on the Korean peninsula nuclear problem, says Russia is interested in ensuring a nuclear-free Korean peninsula. The issue of Russian participation in helping North Korea with energy may be raised in the future.

11 February 2007 Finance Minister Aleksey Kudrin attends a meeting of the G7 finance ministers in Essen, Germany. He says Russia has every chance to join the WTO.

11 February 2007 Vladimir Putin says that there is no need for Russia to include the EU energy charter into the text of the fundamental EU-Russian cooperation agreement.

Putin says that Russia will not support any decision on the Kosovo status if it infringes the rights of any party involved.

11 February 2007 Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says that Russia has no enemies today. He says Russia has no interest in leading an anti-US bloc.

Ivanov says that the Iran nuclear issue can be resolved by political-diplomatic methods and promises that Moscow "will not act behind the scenes" in negotiations with Iran.

11 February 2007 The chairman of the Federation Council International Affairs Committee, Mikhail Margelov, thinks that the West should take heed of the concerns expressed by Vladimir Putin at the Munich Security Conference.

11 February 2007 Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov has said that Russia has no interest in disrupting NATO's unity but no intention of joining the organization either. He says the prospects of future Russia-NATO cooperation are uncertain. "We have no interest in disrupting the unity of NATO...We have cooperated with NATO, particularly within the framework of the Russia-NATO Council, where we have been working for five years and have already reached a certain level."

Ivanov says it would have been more logical for the USA to deploy their air defence systems not in the Czech Republic or Poland but in Turkey or Afghanistan.

12 February 2007 Vladimir Putin visits Saudi Arabia. Some 10 agreements on protecting investment and improving economic cooperation were signed following the talks. Tatarstan President Mintimer Shaymiyev is accompanying Putin.

12 February 2007 Vladimir Putin arrives in Qatar upon concluding his official visit to Saudi Arabia. Putin says Russia and Qatar will coordinate their actions in the gas sphere irrespective of whether a gas equivalent of OPEC is set up. Putin also confirmed that Russia would definitely attend a conference of gas producers to be held in Doha in April. He refuses to rule out the idea of a gas cartel.

12 February 2007 The MFA says Moscow has demanded explanations from Washington over US Defence Secretary Robert Gates' remarks about Russia. On 7 February Gates stated to US Congress that Russia may become a threat to the USA.

12 February 2007 The chairman of the Duma committee for international affairs, Konstantin Kosachev, says Russia should be prepared to supply DPRK with electricity and fuel.

13 February 2007 Vladimir Putin visits Jordan. Deputy head of the Russian Economic Development and Trade Ministry Vitaliy Savelyev and Minister of Trade and Industry of Jordan Salim al-Khaza'ilah sign an intergovernmental agreement on stimulation and mutual protection of capital investment.

13 February 2007 Vladimir Putin says Russia will not participate in actions that could undermine international energy markets.

If consumers of hydrocarbons coordinate their actions, like in the International Energy Agency and at other venues, what prevents producers from coordinating their actions too? This coordination will not be aimed at undermining energy security; it will be aimed, and I hope it will, and Russia will act in this direction, at strengthening the international energy market.

Putin states in Amman that:

We are constantly in contact, exchanging views on the developments in the region and, obviously, on the most acute problem of the Palestinian-Israeli settlement. Russia is a member of the international mediators' quartet and we certainly intend to use our influence in the region and our special relations with our Arab friends, as well as the level of relations we formed with Israel, in making our own contribution to the settlement of this process.

Vladimir Putin meets Mahmud Abbas, the leader of the Palestinian National Authority, in Amman.

13 February 2007 Sergey Lavrov welcomes the document signed after "the six-party talks" in Beijing on the North Korean nuclear problem.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Losyukov says Russia has no plans to write off North Korea's debt.

Losyukov says that Russia is in favour of dismantling the reactor in Yongbyon.

14 February 2007 The deputy head of the ministry's fuel and energy department, Sergey Mikhaylov, attends the KERA week-2007 international energy conference in Houston (USA). He says by 2015 the share of Russian oil for consumptive use in EU countries will be 20 per cent, in Asia-Pacific countries, five per cent and in the United States, 1 per cent.

14 February 2007 Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov visits Turkmenistan for talks with the newly-elected Turkmen president, Gurbanguly Berdimuhammedow.

14 February 2007 Sergey Lavrov says Moscow will agree to a radical reduction in North Korea's debt.

Lavrov visits the United Arab Emirates. He says it is necessary to think of a way out of the impasse and to create conditions for the start of talks on Iran's nuclear programme.

Lavrov meets the Indian and Chinese foreign ministers in New Delhi.

14 February 2007 Deputy Foreign Ministry Vladimir Titov says that the implementation of the plans to dismantle the memorial to the soldier-liberator in Tallinn will lead to irreversible consequences for Russian-Estonian relations.

15 February 2007 Sergey Lavrov describes the adoption by the Estonian parliament of the law on demolition of the monument to the Soviet warrior as "a sacrilegious act unacceptable for modern Europe".

15 February 2007 Sergey Lavrov urges the USA and Europe to overcome their differences over Iraq and says that important decisions need to be taken jointly.

15 February 2007 The foreign minister's special envoy to the Balkans, Aleksandr Botsan-Kharchenko, says he doubts that the UN special envoy Martti Ahtisaari's proposal for Kosovo settlement can become a basis for determining Kosovo's future status.

15 February 2007 Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Losyukov says it is still too early to talk about removing the sanctions against North Korea.

16 February 2007 Sergey Lavrov says that Russia has not yet made the final decision on whether or not to withdraw from the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (INF).

LDPR Duma deputy Sergey Abeltsev proposes that Russia's right to unilateral withdrawal from the 1987 Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles, in retaliation for the USA's move to strengthen its system of missile defence in areas close to Russia's borders, be incorporated in the country's present guidelines on national security.

16 February 2007 Sergey Lavrov says Moscow is continuing to press for Iran to suspend its uranium enrichment work.

16 February 2007 Ukrainian interior minister Vasyl Tsushko visits Moscow. He signs a cooperation agreement with his Russian counterpart Rashid Nurgaliyev.

16 February 2007 Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Losyukov says a "small but important step towards the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula has now been taken", on his return from Beijing where the fifth round of the six-party talks on the North Korean nuclear problem has been held.

16 February 2007 Konstantin Kosachev, Chairman of the Duma committee for international affairs, welcomes the tone of Vladimir Putin's speech at the Munich security conference.

17 February 2007 The presidential envoy for relations with the EU, Sergey Yastrzhembskiy says that Vladimir Putin's speech at the Munich Conference on Security Policy on 10 February was not designed to provoke confrontation with the West, but was a declaration that Russia has re-emerged as a major international player.

19 February 2007 Vladimir Pavlov, head of the management of the company in charge of the construction of the Bushehr station Atomstroyeksport, says he is expecting the deadline for the completion of the Bushehr nuclear power station to be amended owing to nonpayments by Iran and to problems with supplies of equipment from third countries. The launch of Bushehr could be pushed back to mid-2008 from late 2007.

19 February 2007 Commander of the Strategic Missile Troops Nikolay Solovtsov says the Strategic Missile Troops will be capable of destroying US antimissile facilities if they are deployed in Poland and the Czech Republic. Solovtsov says that, if needed, production of medium-range missiles could be resumed in the Russian Federation in the shortest period of time.

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 Slovak Minister of Economy Lubomir Jahodatek has talks with Deputy Prime Minister Sergey Naryshkin. Russia will help build Slovak nuclear power stations.

20 February 2007 Sergey Lavrov states:

We are seriously concerned about plans to deploy elements of the US antimissile defence system in Europe, about the state of crisis in the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty, which clearly does not stimulate the building of trust, and about the enlargement of NATO, which is taking place contrary to the assurances given to us previously. We are also concerned about the advancement of the alliance's military infrastructure towards the Russian border.

Russia will react in a measured and adequate way to the threat arising to our national security, without being drawn into a new confrontation, a new arms race.

20 February 2007 Sergey Shamba, the foreign minister of the Georgian unrecognized republic of Abkhazia urges Russia to act decisively on Kosovo "precedent".

We believe that the precedent will make it possible for the Russian leadership to act decisively. This will be not only in the interests of Abkhazia, but in the interests of Russia as well, because Russia has permanent interests in our region and it is very clear that one should seize the opportunity. Wasted time may result in Russia completely losing its influence and presence in the region.

20 February 2007 Russia's representative Vladimir Voronkov says at a meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna that the Russian side believes that the UN special envoy Martti Ahtisaari's Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status

Settlement is just "an initial draft for talks between Belgrade and Pristina". The Russian envoy warned against the imposition of a strict timeframe on the negotiation process and expressed regret over Ahtisaari's intention to hand over his proposals to the UN Security Council by the end of March in any case. Voronkov called on Belgrade and Pristina to work constructively and said that the return of Serb refugees to Kosovo was a priority. He says he opposes a one-sided solution on the status of Kosovo.

20 February 2007 Nikolay Bordyuzha, secretary-general of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, says a number of threats to Eurasian security are associated with attempts by some out-of-the-region states to establish their geopolitical leadership in the world.

The risks associated with attempts by a number of countries to ensure their geopolitical leadership - in order to have monopoly influence on the dynamics of regional and international development - have become topical again. For these purposes, entire regions such as the Transcaucasus and Central Asia have been declared to be objects of strategic interests of out-of-the-region organizations.

Bordyuzha is speaking at an international scientific and practical conference on the problems of international security and prospects for the CSTO development in Moscow.

20 February 2007 Sergey Lavrov and the president of Moldova's breakaway Dniester region, Igor Smirnov, discuss ways to lower the level of confrontation between Chisinau and Tiraspol.

20 February 2007 Rosatom states that Iran is underfinancing the construction of the Bushehr power plant. From the fourth quarter of 2006, only 60 per cent of the announced financing was paid; in January, 5.1m (dollars) was paid into Atomstroyexport's account, and in February nothing was paid at all

21 February 2007 Sergey Lavrov says that Russia opposes the use force against Iran and that it does not see a sensible alternative to settling the Iran nuclear issue through talks.

21 February 2007 The Russo-French Security Council meets in Moscow.

21 February 2007 Sergey Lavrov says he is against a "hasty and unprepared withdrawal of troops from Iraq".

A hasty and unprepared departure of foreign troops from that country would throw it into an even worse chaos...Drawing up a well-thought-out timetable for the completion of the multinational force's mission would be an important step facilitating the stabilization of the situation in Iraq. We do not think however that the USA's and their allies' troops should leave Iraq immediately...The timetable for their withdrawal should be drawn up taking into account all factors and circumstances, including the nature of the development of the military and political situation and the readiness by Iraqi law enforcement bodies to carry out the tasks set before them independently.

21 February 2007 Russia and the Republic of South Africa sign an agreement on uranium extraction.

21 February 2007 The Quartet meets in Berlin. Russia opposes sanctions against the Palestinian government.

22 February 2007 Minister of Economic Development and Trade German Gref says Russia is prepared to examine the question of extending a 1.5 billion-dollar stabilization credit to Belarus.

22 February 2007 The European Commission allocates a 17.5m-euro (23m-dollar) worth humanitarian aid to the most needy Chechen residents.

22 February 2007 First Deputy Prime Minister Sergey Ivanov has talks in Moscow with US National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley. The sides exchanged opinions on a wide range of issues on the international agenda, including the Iranian nuclear problem, Afghanistan, the situation in the Middle East, the North Korean nuclear programme and Kosovo. Hadley also has talks with Security Council Secretary Igor Ivanov, who calls for scrapping the Jackson-Vanik amendment to the US-Russian trade bill.

Deputy Foreign Minister Grigoriy Karasin and US Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns discuss regional security problems in Washington.

22 February 2007 Sergey Lavrov meets his German counterpart Frank Walter-Steinmeier in Berlin.

22 February 2007 Russian Bushehr contractors say delays in payments by Iran for the supply of equipment for the Bushehr nuclear power plant "are affecting the progress of work at the site".

22 February 2007 Vladimir Putin and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert have a telephone conversation.

23 February 2007 Sergey Lavrov visits Afghanistan. A joint Russo-Afghan statement is signed. He says that Russia will continue providing necessary help to Afghanistan to facilitate reconstruction of the country. Russia and Afghanistan reach agreement on debt.

23 February 2007 Sergey Lavrov says that he "intends to carefully study the report by the head of the IAEA Muhammad al-Baradi'i on Iran's nuclear dossier".

Chairman of the Federation Council international affairs committee Mikhail Margelov says Russia's position on Iran should be objective but firm. Deputy chairman of the international committee Vasiliy Likhachev says: "The firmness of our position does not mean that Russia wants to limit Teheran's energy sovereignty, but we are worried about international security, and therefore our cooperation with the other Security Council members must not grow weak".

23 February 2007 The Russian companies Tekhsnabeksport, Renova and Vneshtorgbank form a joint venture for the mining of uranium in Namibia.

24 February 2007 Konstantin Kosachev, chairman of the Duma committee for international affairs, says the USA and Russia have no choice but to be "allies and partners". He denies that there is a crisis in US-Russian relations, and says that relations are in essence unchanged. He says the USA is making many mistakes in its foreign policy.

25 February 2007 Sergey Lavrov says Moscow does not understand the USA's decision to deploy elements of an anti-missile defence system in the Czech Republic and Poland.

26 February 2007 Khalid Mish'al, head of the Hamas political bureau, visits Moscow. He calls on the Quartet to hold talks with Israel.

26 February 2007 Sergey Lavrov expresses the concern about the possibility of military strikes against Iran.

Lavrov is interviewed on the MFA website. He discusses Iran, missile defence and Kosovo.

27 February 2007 Hamas leader Khalid Mish'al has talks in Moscow with Sergey Lavrov. Lavrov calls for the lifting of sanctions against Hamas.

27 February 2007 Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Losyukov says that the six-party talks on the North Korean nuclear programme could become a basis in future for creating a structure to resolve other regional issues.

27 February 2007 Industry and Energy Minister Viktor Khristenko says Russia proposes cooperating more closely with Japan in the oil sector. He also says that Russia and Japan should cooperate in the hi-tech sectors, such as the car industry, space and atomic energy.

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.

27 February 2007 Mikhail Dmitriyev, director of the Federal Service for Military-Technical Cooperation, says Russian weapon exports could reach 8 billion dollars in 2007. South-East Asian countries remain Russia's main military partners, including India and China. However, their share has dropped slightly recently. It was 62 per cent in 2006, but at 74 per cent in 2005.

27 February 2007 Federal Service for Military-Technical Cooperation says Russian arms exports reached 6.5 billion dollars in 2006, which is the absolute record for the entire period that the system of military-technical cooperation has existed in its present form. At the same time, foreign currency receipts reached 8 billion dollars, which is also an absolute record. The dynamics of export of military products for the period mentioned was as follows: 3.7 billion dollars in 2001, 4.8 billion dollars in 2002, 5.6 billion dollars in 2003, 5.8 billion dollars in 2004 and 6.1 billion dollars in 2005. Exports in 2006 went to 64 countries. For comparison, in 2004 arms were supplied to 57 countries and in 2005 to 61 countries.

The Asian region continues to remain the largest importer of Russian weapons. Central, East and South Asia in 2006 accounted for 65 per cent of the total export of Russia weapons, which in monetary terms meant 4.2 billion dollars. The main partners of Russia in the region are India, China, Vietnam and South Korea.

The share of the countries of the Middle East and North Africa increased significantly - they accounted for over 21 per cent of the total. In monetary terms it reached 1.4 billion dollars in 2006, which is twice as much as in 2005.

The amount of exports to the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean Basin increased noticeably - from 0.5 per cent to 7.7 per cent from the total volume, reaching about 0.5 billion dollars. The main customers were Venezuela and Mexico.

The position on the markets of the states of Central, Eastern and Southern Europe was maintained, however their share in Russian exports is small, about 3.8 per cent in 2006.

Export to the CIS countries has increased. Despite the fact that their share is so far insignificant - just over 1 per cent of the total volume, its monetary value doubled compared with 2005. This has taken place thanks to a significant increase of supplies to Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus and Uzbekistan.

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

28 February 2007 A Russian military delegation led by head of the Defence Ministry's main department for international military cooperation Col-Gen Anatoliy Mazurkevich will hold consultations on regional and global stability in Washington on 9 March.

28 February 2007 Prime minister Mikhail Fradkov calls for Japanese business to invest in Russia.

March

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

1 March 2007 The MFA says it regrets that the director of US National Intelligence, Michael McConnell, has made unfriendly statements regarding Russia.

1 March 2007 The MFA says it welcomes the Iraqi government's initiative to hold, on a working level, an international meeting in Baghdad in March with the participation of representatives of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, Iraq's neighbouring countries and interested regional organizations. Russia accepts the invitation.

1 March 2007 Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Titov says some of the international mediators for settling the Kosovo problem are already trying to lay responsibility for a possible failure of the talks and further negative developments on Russia, Titov is visiting Belgrade. Titov says Russia favours "a compromise, negotiated solution on Kosovo, reached without artificial deadlines".

1 March 2007 Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Grushko says the OSCE and its institutions "are increasingly treated as something which 'exists in its own right'". He criticises ODHIR for acting independently of member states. He says OSCE should become a full fledged international organisation. He says OSCE

organizational looseness means that it is used to pursue unilateral goals of which Vladimir Putin spoke about at Munich on 10 February.

1 March 2007 Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Losyukov says a Russian-led working group that is being set up within the framework of the six-party talks on the North Korean nuclear issue to discuss the mechanism of ensuring peace and security in northeast Asia will hold its first meeting a few days before the new round of the talks opening in Beijing on 19 March.

1 March 2007 Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe says a peace treaty with Russia is a possibility. He also discusses energy cooperation in an interview with Russian TV.

2 March 2007 Vladimir Putin discusses energy cooperation with Belgian prime minister, Guy Verhofstadt. They discuss the cooperation of a gas storage facility in Europe.

2 March 2007 The air force's commander-in-chief, Vladimir Mikhaylov, says Russia can counter any US anti-missile defence system that may be deployed in the Caucasus. The head of the US Missile Defence Agency, Lt-Gen Henry Obering, says that US anti-missile defence system radars may be deployed there.

2 March 2007 The secretary-general of the CSTO, Nikolay Bordyuzha, says CSTO member states will help Afghanistan develop its own armed forces. A CSTO working group on Afghanistan will travel to that country in March 2007-April.

2 March 2007 The MFA criticises Israeli armed forces' raids in the West Bank.

4 March 2007 Vladimir Putin has signed a law on the ratification of an agreement on readmission between the Russian Federation and the European Union. The agreement, which was reached in Sochi in May 2006, is aimed at creating effective procedures for finding and returning to their native countries persons who do not comply with the rules of entry or residence in Russia or EU countries.

5 March 2007 Aytech Bizhev, deputy commander-in-chief of the Russian air force, says Russia is ready to sign an agreement on creating a joint regional air-defence system with Belarus.

Bizhev says the planned deployment of a US radar facility in the Czech Republic is nothing other than a step towards the creation by the USA of a system for missile attack warning along the entire perimeter of Russia's borders in order to increase time for reacting to the launch of Russian intercontinental ballistic missiles.

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.

5 March 2007 Russian navy spokesman Capt (First Class) Igor Dygalo describes the Ukrainian bailiff's attempt to seize the Mars-75 navigation facility in Kherson Region as provocative.

5 March 2007 Armenian Defence Minister Serzh Sargsyan meets First Deputy Prime Minister Sergey Ivanov.

6 March 2007 Sergey Lavrov and Security Council secretary Igor Ivanov have talks with South Korean foreign minister Song Min-soon in Moscow.

6 March 2007 Sergey Lavrov says Russia has not yet received a clear answer from the USA regarding plans for the deployment of parts of its anti-missile defence system.

The MFA says that the possible deployment of a US missile defence installation in the Caucasus will hinder friendly relations between Russia and the states in the region that could contemplate such a possibility.

7 March 2007 Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov visits Uzbekistan.

7 March 2007 Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Saltanov welcomes the initiative to hold a meeting in Baghdad within the framework of preparations for a conference on Iraq at the level of foreign ministers.

7 March 2007 Talks between Atomstroyeksport and an Iranian delegation take place without result.

7 March 2007 Russian ambassador to the United Kingdom Yuriy Fedotov says the Russian Prosecutor-General's Office and the British Crown Prosecution Service are in direct contact regarding further action in the "Litvinenko case".

7 March 2007 Russia's governor at the IAEA Grigoriy Berdennikov calls on North Korea to renew its membership of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and to confirm its adherence to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as a state which does not possess nuclear weapons.

7 March 2007 Andrey Kokoshin, chairman of the Duma Committee on the Commonwealth of Independent States and Relations with Compatriots, says that Russia's new military doctrine will take into account the US and NATO's ambitions to strengthen their global positions.

8 March 2007 Atomstroyeksport has talks with an Iranian delegation on the financing of the Bushehr nuclear power plant. The secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, Ali Larijani, claims that Russia is demanding payment for the Bushehr nuclear power station earlier than the dates set in the original agreement.

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.

The MFA criticises the US State Department's human rights report with regard to its assessment of the situation in Russia.

9 March 2007 Deputy Prime Minister Sergey Naryshkin says the construction of the Burgas-Alexandroupolis pipeline may start in the beginning of 2008 and be completed a year later. A draft agreement on the pipeline will be signed when Vladimir Putin visits Greece on 14-15 March. A project company will be created, 51 per cent of which will belong to Russia. The rest will be equally divided between Bulgaria and Greece.

9 March 2007 The MFA calls on Ukraine not to take unilateral steps in the situation surrounding control over the Black Sea Fleet's nautical installations and

underlines that such actions may lead to increased tension and undermine the negotiation process.

9 March 2007 Chairman of the Duma Committee on International Affairs Konstantin Kosachev speaks on Radio Russia about the goals of the inter-party conference on foreign policy set up in the Duma.

10 March 2007 The MFA welcomes the participation of Iran, Syria and other states from the region in the international Iraq Security Conference, which opens in Baghdad.

11 March 2007 A Russian delegation visits Iran to resume negotiations regarding the construction of the nuclear power station in Bushehr. The consultations are to address the problem of Tehran's underfinancing the project.

12 March 2007 A representative of Atomstroyeksport says the physical launch of the first power unit at the Iranian nuclear power plant at Bushehr will not take place in September as originally planned, and nor will nuclear fuel be delivered to Bushehr in March.

12 March 2007 Georgia claims that Russian helicopters launched attacks in the Kodori gorge. This is denied by the MFA.

12 March 2007 The MFA says that Moscow views the Baghdad meeting held in Iraq last Saturday as a useful step towards interaction between all members of the international community interested in stabilizing the situation in that country.

12 March 2007 The MFA welcomes the meeting on 8-9 March between Lebanon's parliamentary majority leader Sa'd Hariri and the head of the Lebanese parliament, Nabih Birri, representing the opposition headed by Hezbollah.

12 March 2007 CSTO secretary-general Nikolay Bordyuzha says the CSTO is planning to establish direct contacts with the leadership of Afghanistan to provide it with help in post-conflict reconstruction. A CSTO working group on Afghanistan, which includes national coordinators from the CSTO member states and officials from the CSTO secretariat, has started work in Kabul.

12 March 2007 The Russian company Tekhsnabeksport and Canadian Cameco Corporation sign memorandums of cooperation in the field of geological exploration and uranium extraction in Russia and Canada.

13 March 2007 Atomstroyeksport says it is continuing the construction of the nuclear power plant in Bushehr at the maximum scale possible without funding from the Iranian side. However, it warns that the developing situation where decisive measures are not taken may result in the deterioration in the project's quality.

13 March 2007 The leadership of the Federation Council Defence and Security Committee criticises Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko's statement supporting the deployment of sections of the US missile defence system in the Czech Republic and Poland.

13 March 2007 Representatives of CIS peacekeeping forces, UN mission, Abkhazian and Georgian sides, start work on investigating the alleged shelling incident in the upper part of the Kodori gorge on 11 March.

13 March 2007 Vladimir Putin meets Pope Benedict XVI in the Vatican. Putin conveys the greetings of Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Aleksiy II to the Pope.

13 March 2007 European Commission representatives and officials from Rosselkhoznadzor fail to agree on the resumption of imports of Polish meat and other agricultural produce to Russia.

13 March 2007 Deputies of the Duma and the Mongolian State Great Hural are to discuss today the development of cross-border cooperation between the regions of Russia and Mongolia at inter-parliamentary hearings in Ulan-Ude (capital of Buryatia).

14 March 2007 Vladimir Putin visits Italy.

14 March 2007 Dmitriy Kovtun, who together with his partner Andrey Lugovoy is a witness in the Aleksandr Litvinenko case, says he is "willing to give the utmost cooperation" to German law enforcement agencies investigating the smuggling of radioactive materials.

14 March 2007 The head of Rosatom, Sergey Kiriyyenko, says that Iran has paid nothing for the construction of the Bushehr nuclear power plant since mid-January.

The US Deputy Energy Secretary Clayton Sell says the USA "is ready for and agrees to Russia's cooperation with Iran in the area of nuclear energy if Russia supplies nuclear fuel to Iran, provided the processed fuel is sent back to the Russian Federation and the cooperation itself is based on exclusively peaceful energy production".

Mikhail Margelov, head of the Federation Council Committee for International Affairs, criticises Iran in an article in *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*.

14 March 2007 The chairman of the Duma committee for CIS affairs and contacts with compatriots and former secretary of the Security Council, Andrey Kokoshin, believes that plans to deploy segments of the US missile defence system in the Czech Republic and Poland are unacceptable.

14 March 2007 Presidential aide Sergey Yastrzhembskiy says work on the new agreement between Russia and the European Union has not started yet and is still being held up by "the Polish meat issue".

14 March 2007 The CSTO says Afghanistan intends to develop cooperation with the CSTO. This is said in a report issued by the CSTO press service following a trip to Afghanistan by a CSTO working group from 9 to 13 March.

14 March 2007 The MFA says Russia welcomes North Korea's intention to restore its membership in the IAEA.

15 March 2007 Vladimir Putin visits Greece. Russia, Bulgaria and Greece sign an agreement to build an oil pipeline from Burgas to Alexandroupolis. Negotiations on the project have lasted 13 years. The Russian share in the project is 51 per cent. Construction will start in 2008.

15 March 2007 Atomstroyeksport sends the chief of Atomstroyeksport's Iran department dealing with the construction of the Bushehr nuclear power plant, Vladimir Pavlov, to the talks in Tehran on the construction of the power station.

15 March 2007 Moscow recalls from Strasbourg its plenipotentiary representative at the European Court, Pavel Laptev.

15 March 2007 Chairman of the Federation Council International Affairs Committee Mikhail Margelov says the formation of a Palestinian government of national unity is a positive event but problems remain.

The MFA welcomes the creation of a Palestinian coalition government following the Mecca agreement of 8 February 2007 between Fatah and Hamas.

16 March 2007 The head of Rosatom, Sergey Kiriyenko, announces that Russia will not take upon itself the financing of the construction of the nuclear power plant in Bushehr but wants Iran itself to pay for it.

The president of the Atompromresursy investment and consultancy company, Andrey Cherkasenko, says the behaviour of the Iranian negotiators on the Bushehr nuclear power station is not helping to resolve the problems surrounding the plant.

16 March 2007 First Deputy Prime Minister Sergey Ivanov says that some Eastern European countries manufacture copies of Soviet and Russian weapons without the necessary licences and some Western countries are trying to limit Russian military exports by political means.

16 March 2007 The deputy head of the Russian delegation, Russian Foreign Ministry roving ambassador Vladimir Rakhmanin says the Russian side is satisfied with the first meeting of the working group headed by Russia within the framework of the six-party talks on the nuclear problem on the Korean peninsula.

16 March 2007 Russian Chamber of Commerce and Industry President and ex-Prime Minister Yevgeniy Primakov says granting Kosovo independence may provoke a series of armed conflicts in some former Soviet republics.

16 March 2007 The MFA expresses puzzlement at the Ukrainian Security Service's statement on Moscow mayor Yuriy Luzhkov's pronouncements in Sevastopol.

16 March 2007 The MFA says the statement by the Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili about his readiness to start an official dialogue with the so-called alternative government of South Ossetia led by Dmitriy Sanakoyev could significantly complicate the process of resolving the Georgia-Ossetia conflict.

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

16 March 2007 Mikhail Fradkov visits Angola to discuss economic cooperation.

17 March 2007 The MFA says Russia is satisfied with the draft of the UN resolution on Iran but does not yet view it as a final one.

17 March 2007 Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Israeli Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni discuss by telephone topical questions to do with a

Palestinian-Israeli settlement in the light of the creation of a Palestinian National Authority coalition government

17 March 2007 Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov visits Namibia. He says Russia is ready to begin joint development of uranium deposits in Namibia. Russia is also investing substantial money in the development of oil deposits in the north of Namibia. A 84m-dollar-worth contract has already been signed.

17 March 2007 Sergey Lavrov sharply criticizes the USA's unilateralist approach to international affairs and demands that Russia be treated as an equal partner. He is addressing the 15th assembly of the Council for Foreign and Defence Policy.

18 March 2007 The secretary of the Security Council, Igor Ivanov, says Moscow opposes the acquisition of nuclear weapons by Iran and is actively working to prevent such a development. He says, "both directly and indirectly, this will pose a threat to the interests of Russia".

18 March 2007 Secretary of the Security Council Igor Ivanov says work on a new military doctrine has only just started. He is addressing the Council on Foreign and Defence Policy on Russian security policy.

Duma MP and ex-Security Council Secretary Andrey Kokoshin says the policy pursued by the USA and its allies could lead to a collapse of the arms limitation and reduction regime.

18 March 2007 Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Losyukov says the implementation of measures for the first stage of denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, expected to take place over two months, is becoming protracted. He says it "is premature to talk about the possibility of holding a meeting at the level of foreign ministers of the six countries taking part in the talks on Korea issues".

19 March 2007 An aide to the defence minister, General Vladimir Shamanov, says the war in Iraq, started by the United States and its allies four years ago, will become a national catastrophe for the USA.

The MFA hopes that a law on hydrocarbons giving foreign companies access to the Iraqi oil and gas market would be passed in that country.

19 March 2007 Vladimir Putin has talks in Moscow with Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev. They discuss cooperation in the civilian nuclear sector. In 2006, trade between the two countries grew by more than 30 per cent; Russian export increased by 40 per cent. The transit of energy resources, the efficient use of the Baykonur cosmodrome and the development of Caspian resources are key cooperation areas.

19 March 2007 Russia's permanent representative at the UN, Vitaliy Churkin, says the UN secretary-general's special representative in Kosovo, UNMIK chief Joachim Rucker, has taken a one-sided position on the issue of determining the region's status.

19 March 2007 Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov visits South Africa.

20 March 2007 The MFA states that issues of the construction of the Bushehr nuclear power plant in Iran should not be linked to the discussion on the problem of Iran's nuclear programme.

Atomstroyeksport denies western media reports that Russian specialists have been recalled from the Bushehr nuclear power plant in Iran. It says routine rotation is taking place. At present, there are about 2,000 Russian specialists working at Bushehr.

The Security Council denies the *New York Times* claims of Moscow's alleged ultimatum to Iran. The newspaper reports that Russia had allegedly linked further construction of the Bushehr nuclear power plant with the solution of the Iranian nuclear problem.

Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Losyukov says the stalling of the six party talks in Beijing on the North Korean nuclear problem over the unfreezing of its bank accounts in Macau, may render North Korea unable to freeze its nuclear programme inside the previously agreed period of 60 days from the unfreezing of its bank accounts.

20 March 2007 Col-Gen Boris Cheltsov, chief of the general staff of the Russian Air Force, says the deployment of components of the US antimissile defence system in Eastern Europe poses a serious threat to Russia's national security and could ultimately undermine the entire global strategic stability.

20 March 2007 The headquarters of the Joint Peacekeeping Forces in the Georgian-Ossetian conflict zone rejects Georgian media claims that a Georgian Mi-24 helicopter was fired on near the Ossetian village of Isakkau.

21 March 2007 The head of the Federal Space Agency Anatoliy Perminov says the Russian space satellite navigation system, GLONASS, and the European one, Galileo, will be compatible and complementary.

21 March 2007 Sergey Lavrov addresses the Duma on Russo-Belarusian relations.

22 March 2007 Hungarian Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsany visits Moscow for talks with Vladimir Putin.

22 March 2007 Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Losyukov announces that the agreements reached earlier at the six-party talks on the nuclear problem of the Korean peninsula will remain in force while the suspension of talks (of the sixth round, which took place in Beijing from 19 to 22 March) is linked to the need to resolve a number of technical issues.

Losyukov blames the USA for the breakdown of talks. North Korea broke off talks as the question of unfreezing the North Korean accounts in the Delta Asia Bank in Macao had not been resolved by the deadline, i.e. 15 March.

22 March 2007 The head of the main directorate for international military cooperation of the MOD, Col-Gen Anatoliy Mazurkevich, resigns.

23 March 2007 The head of the Federal Service for Ecological, Technological and Nuclear Monitoring, Konstantin Pulikovskiy, chairs a meeting of the Russian-North Korean intergovernmental commission in Moscow. He says North Korea is presently unable to pay Russia its 8.8 billion-dollar debt which remains since the Soviet times and is proposing to take a political decision on this issue.

23 March 2007 The head of Serbia's Kosovo Coordination Centre, Sanda Raskovic-Ivic visits Moscow for talks with Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Titov.

23 March 2007 Sergey Lavrov is interviewed in *Moskovskiye Novosti*. He says the US strategy in Iraq should be radically changed, and collective actions should succeed it. He says deploying elements of the American missile defence in Europe poses a real threat to Russia's security.

23 March 2007 Economic Development and Trade Minister German Gref says Russia will complete talks on its accession to the World Trade Organization by the end of 2007.

24 March 2007 Russia's permanent representative to the UN, Vitaliy Churkin, says that Russia succeeded in defending its earlier position, which rules out the use of force against Iran, in the debate on a new UN Security Council resolution on the Iranian nuclear issue. UNSC resolution 1747 is passed.

24 March 2007 Vladimir Putin sends the Federal Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany Angela Merkel, who holds the EU presidency, a congratulatory message to mark the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Rome.

25 March 2007 The MFA says that Russia's proposals on cooperation with Iran in the area of peaceful nuclear energy remain on the table. These proposals were put forward in June 2006. They include proposals on cooperation with Iran in the area of civilian nuclear energy, legally binding guarantees on the supply of nuclear fuel, and broader interaction on security-related, political and economic issues.

25 March 2007 Vladimir Putin publishes an article on the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome on the presidential website. He says Russia shares the values of the overwhelming majority of Europeans and the continent will not be fully united until Russia is an "integral part of the European process".

25 March 2007 The MFA says the unanimous adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1747 "reflects the profound concern of the international community with regard to Iran's nuclear programme".

26 March 2007 Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov visits Saudi Arabia.

26 March 2007 The head of North Ossetia, Taymuraz Mamsurov, says that the republic will eventually unite with South Ossetia.

26 March 2007 Chinese President Hu Jintao visits Moscow.

26 March 2007 Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Kislyak says the resolution of the UN Security Council on Iran should not hamper cooperation of Moscow and Tehran.

Sergey Novikov, aide to the head of Rosatom, says that Iran has resumed payments to Atomstroyeksport for the construction of the Bushehr nuclear plant.

The head of the Federation Council's International Affairs Committee, Mikhail Margelov, says he doubts that the aim of Iran's nuclear programme is "only the peaceful atom".

The chairman of the State Duma's CIS Affairs Committee, Andrey Kokoshin says the UN Security Council resolution on Iran "gives reason for hope for an optimal resolution of the Iranian nuclear problem to the benefit of both the international community and the Iranians themselves".

Konstantin Kosachev, chairman of the Duma Committee on International Affairs, is interviewed on TV. He urges Iran not to "choose confrontation" in response to fresh sanctions imposed by the UN Security Council.

26 March 2007 Georgia files a lawsuit against Russia with the European Human Rights Court in Strasbourg claiming compensation for "blatant violations of human rights of Georgian citizens during deportation of thousands of Georgian citizens from Russia in 2006."

26 March 2007 Anatoliy Perminov, head of Russian Federal Space Agency Roskosmos, sets out plans for cooperation with EU. He says the Russian GLONASS satellite navigation system was designed to match the European Galileo counterpart.

27 March 2007 Chinese President Hu Jintao has talks with Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov in Moscow on trade.

Chinese leader Hu Jintao visits Tatarstan.

27 March 2007 Sergey Lavrov calls on Iran to accept the recently adopted UN Security Council resolution on Iran.

27 March 2007 Chairman of the Duma committee for CIS affairs Andrey Kokoshin says both Russia and China have "more than enough reason to veto in the UN Security Council a resolution granting independence to Kosovo". He is commenting on the submission of Martti Ahtisaari's report to the UN Security Council. He says Ahtisaari should be replaced as the UN secretary-general's special envoy.

27 March 2007 The MFA describes as an unfriendly step the Georgian lawsuit versus Moscow filed at the European Court of Human Rights on the alleged harassment of Georgians in Russia.

The MFA says Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili's plan to set up an interim administrative entity in the Tskhinvali district in South Ossetia violates the internationally recognized format for settling the Georgian-Ossetian conflict.

27 March 2007 Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov says that the signing of a treaty on the state border with Latvia rules out the possibility of Latvia's territorial claims to Russia. Fradkov and his Latvian counterpart Aigars Kalvitis sign the Russian-Latvian border treaty in Moscow.

27 March 2007 Vladimir Putin has a working meeting with the president of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, in Moscow.

27 March 2007 Russian ambassador to Belarus Aleksandr Surikov says Russia does not intend to station a space monitoring system radar on the territory of its diplomatic mission in Belarus.

27 March 2007 The MOD states that Russia is involved in military-technical cooperation with 80 foreign nations and Russia's export of military production increased by 50 per cent from 2001 to 2005. Over the period from 2001 until 2006, the export of Russian military-purpose production rose by a factor of 1.5, from 4 billion to 6.5 billion dollars. The largest importers of Russian military-purpose

production currently included China, India, Algeria, Venezuela, Iran, Malaysia, Serbia.

28 March 2007 The MFA denies reports about an imminent evacuation of Russian citizens from the Bushehr nuclear power plant in Iran.

28 March 2007 Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Saltanov meets Iraqi President Jalal Talabani at the League of Arab States summit in Riyadh.

28 March 2007 Oleg Ozerov, director of the MFA Middle East and North Africa department says the MFA is proposing to convene an international conference on the Arab-Israeli settlement.

28 March 2007 Vladimir Putin and US President George W Bush discuss by telephone bilateral collaboration on topical international issues. They discuss the Iranian nuclear issue after the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1747, missile defence and Kosovo.

28 March 2007 The MFA says that Russian defence policy will have to take into account the deployment of components of the US missile defence system in Europe, including in the Czech Republic.

28 March 2007 Vladimir Putin meets Latvian Prime Minister Aigars Kalvitis. He says the Russo-Latvian border treaty does not resolve all bilateral problems. Kalvitis also has talks with Gazprom. They discuss the possibility of building a gas pipeline branch connecting Nord Stream and Latvia.

28 March 2007 Sergey Lavrov publishes the article 'American Antimissiles in Europe: Myths and Reality' in *Handelsblatt*.

29 March 2007 Vladimir Putin sends a message to the League of Arab States summit in Riyadh. He calls for precise timelines for the withdrawal of foreign troops from Iraq.

Sergey Lavrov calls for restraint in the Persian Gulf following the arrest of British soldiers by Iran and US naval exercises off the Iranian coast.

29 March 2007 Sergey Lavrov says that Martti Ahtisaari, the UN secretary general's envoy for Kosovo, has "decided to ignore the disagreements between Belgrade and Pristina, but nothing will come out of it". "One has to talk now not about the disagreements between Russia and the European Union, or disagreements within the EU over the Kosovo status, but the disagreements between Belgrade and Pristina."

Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Titov is interviewed in *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*. He says talks on Kosovo status "have reached a dead end".

29 March 2007 Sergey Lavrov calls for talks with EU and NATO members on US plans to deploy missile defence systems in Europe.

The head of the Federation Council defence and security committee, Nikolay Ozerov, says that the deployment of elements of the US missile defence system in Europe, in the Czech Republic in particular, will be taken into account in the development of the Russian armed forces and in Russia's armaments programme.

29 March 2007 The MFA criticises Georgian plans to develop its own administration in South Ossetia.

29 March 2007 Luc Van den Brande (Belgium) and Theodoros Pangalos (Greece), rapporteurs from a PACE monitoring commission, express concern over some norms of Russian electoral legislation.

29 March 2007 Portuguese foreign minister Luis Amado visits Moscow.

29 March 2007 Duma deputy and the director of the Institute for CIS Studies Konstantin Zatulin says if Ukraine joins NATO, Russia will have to increase military expenditure which may ruin what it has achieved as a result of economic reforms.

29 March 2007 Atomstroyeksport states that at the first unit of the Bushehr nuclear power plant in southern Iran Russian specialists are going ahead with tune-up and adjustment work in routine mode.

30 March 2007 UK ambassador in Moscow Anthony Brenton says Britain hopes that Russia will support it in securing the release of the UK sailors detained in Iran.

30 March 2007 Sergey Lavrov says the MFA "is working on a peaceful solution to the problem surrounding the Iranian nuclear programme".

He says UNSC Resolution 1747 "stresses openness to a resumption (of talks) and Iran's right to gain access to peaceful nuclear energy in full compliance with the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and the rules of the IAEA". The resolution "is not an instrument for punishing Iran, but serves as an appeal for the resumption of the negotiating process".

30 March 2007 Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov visits Kazakhstan.

30 March 2007 The pullout of military hardware from the Russian base in Akhalkalaki will resume on 12 April and end in late May.

31 March 2007 A contract is signed between the Stroytransgaz and Saudi Aramco on the construction of the Shaybah-Abqaiq pipeline in Saudi Arabia.

31 March 2007 Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Titov says Russia will not support the Ahtisaari plan for Kosovo if the Serbs do not support it.