

Russian Domestic Policy: A Chronology

January – March 2008

1 January 2008 Irkutsk Region and Ust-Orda Buryat Autonomous Area formally merge. The new entity will be known as Irkutsk Region.

1 January 2008 The deputy chief of the main directorate for information technology of the Russian Federal Customs Service Nikolay Kravchenko says that more than 850 cases of illegal transportation of goods with high levels of radioactivity were uncovered on the Russian customs border in 2007.

2 January 2008 The Federal Migration Service (FMS) says that Russia intends to attract about 2 million labour migrants from abroad under the foreign labour quota in 2008. This is three times lower than in 2007. In 2007 the government set the quota for labour migrants from countries with which Russia has visa agreements at 308,000 people. Additionally, 6 million migrants from CIS countries were allowed to come to work in Russia without visas in 2007.

4 January 2008 Federation Council speaker Sergey Mironov criticizes the government's tax amnesty.

6 January 2008 Patriarch Aleksey II gives his Christmas blessing to First Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev.

7 January 2008 Drugaya Rossiya claims that one of its activists, 17 year-old Mariya Koleda, was attacked by unknown people in Moscow on 5 January.

8 January 2008 The term of military service of the chief of General Staff of the Armed Forces and first deputy minister of defence, Army General Yuri Baluyevsky, is prolonged until 2010.

9 January 2008 A protest by the Nashi movement outside the European Commission representation in Moscow is curtailed by police.

9 January 2008 Yevgenny Yevstratov is appointed deputy head of Rosatom.

9 January 2008 Rosstat figures show that inflation in Russia in 2007 was 11.9 per cent. The government initially set the inflation target at 8 per cent, but a surge in food prices in the autumn disrupted these plans. In 2006 was 9 per cent.

9 January 2008 Commander-in-Chief of the Interior Ministry (MVD) Internal Troops Army General Nikolay Rogozhkin says that as of 1 January 2008 the districts of the Internal Troops have been reorganized into regional commands: "As per the presidential decree, as of 1 January of the new year the seven districts of the Internal Troops have been reorganized into seven regional commands of the Internal Troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs: Central, Urals, North Caucasus, Volga, Eastern, North-Western and Siberian regional commands." At present the Internal Troops total 199,600.

9 January 2008 Ground Troops Central Command states that the Ground Troops have received six battalions of new armour and a great number of new missile and artillery systems, as well as other arms. Four battalions were completely re-equipped with new armoured personnel carriers, one armour battalion fielded T-90 tanks, and another one BMP-3 infantry fighting vehicles. A total of about 300 missile and artillery systems, 90 anti-tank weapons, over ten air defence systems, and approximately 4,000 utility vehicles entered the inventory of the Ground Troops. In 2008 the troops will receive five battalion sets of new armoured personnel carriers, two sets of T-90 tanks and one set of BMP-3 infantry combat vehicles.

10 January 2008 Secretary of the Central Electoral Commission Nikolay Konkin says that deputies of the legislative assemblies in 11 Russian regions are to be elected on 2 March at the same time as the Russian presidential election. The regions are: Bashkortostan; Ingushetia; Sakha (Yakutia); Altay Territory; Rostov Region; Sverdlovsk Region; Ulyanovsk Region; Yaroslavl Region; Kalmykia; Amur Region; Ivanovo Region.

10 January 2008 The Basmannyy court rules that Deputy Finance Minister Sergey Storchak is to remain in custody until 9 April.

10 January 2008 Prime Minister Viktor Zubkov urges ministers to deal with unresolved tasks. He states that in 2007 GDP increased by 7.6 per cent and industrial production by about 6 per cent.

10 January 2008 First Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev says Russia is capable of becoming a world leader in food production. "We are not only the largest energy producing country in the world, but we also have the potential to become the largest food-producing power in the world. And these problems - these challenges of the 21st century - we can easily turn them to our advantage."

11 January 2008 Vladimir Putin meets Regional Development Minister Dmitry Kozak and the presidential representative for the Southern Federal District Grigory Rapota. They talk about social and economic development in southern Russia.

11 January 2008 First Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev says the Navy must be revived.

We have to revive our navy. You understand why there are not any [naval vessels]. It's because there simply are none. That's it. When we had a normal navy, they [the vessels] were present, and everyone respected us. I will not say they were afraid of us, but they respected us. This needs to be done without fail in order to help our fishermen and also simply to be a fully fledged naval power.

11 January 2008 Medvedev says that the government will commence a pension reform in 2008.

11 January 2008 Chairman of the NGO Voice of Beslan Emma Tagayeva calls on Russia's leadership to protect the organization from legal prosecution. She sends a letter to Vladimir Putin.

11 January 2008 First Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev says that Russia plans to develop extraction of hydrocarbons, in particular from its continental shelf:

We have very good prospects on the shelf...We have an interest in developing this area as a priority...This is a strategic area of development for the Russian economy...We are an energy power, and we should think about the future. We should invest money in this area. We have our own money, although we are prepared to discuss these issues with foreign investors.

11 January 2008 Commander-in-Chief of the MVD Internal Troops Army General Nikolay Rogozhkin states:

A total of 500 to 700 militants continue to act in the North Caucasus. Last year they were considerably less active. Among them are around 50-70 foreign mercenaries...Analysis of the operational information leads us to believe that this year they will not undertake any large-scale operations; they do not have the forces or the means for that. The operational situation in the North Caucasus, including Chechnya, is under the control of the operational group of the Internal Troops, and this control is quite effective.

11 January 2008 Lt General Nikolay Bogdanovsky is appointed new chief of the Ground Troops Main Staff. Bogdanovsky will be replacing in this post Colonel-General Aleksandr Morozov, now retired after reaching the pension age of 60.

11 January 2008 *Vedomosti* reports that Mikhail Zurabov, ex-chief of the Ministry of Health and Social Development, was appointed adviser to the president in October 2007.

12 January 2008 Vladimir Putin attends the consecration of the Cathedral of the Assumption of Iversky Monastery in Valday in Novgorod Region. He says: "I and those who are working together with me today - we represent the state...And unfortunately the state in previous decades did much to undermine the roots of our history, the roots of our culture, including our spiritual culture. This is why so far there is nothing to thank us for."

12 January 2008 The head of the directorate for the fight against organized crime in Kabarda-Balkaria, Anatoly Kyarov, and his bodyguard are shot and killed in Nalchik.

12 January 2008 Street protests take place in Dagestani capital Makhachkala protesting against power and heating cuts.

12 January 2008 Staff members of the regional electoral headquarters of Russian People's Democratic Union leader and former prime minister and presidential candidate Mikhail Kasyanov have been detained for a few hours in Yoshkar-Ola (Republic of Mari El).

13 January 2008 The Glasnost Defence Foundation (GDF) says that the work of journalists in Russia is becoming more difficult and dangerous.

14 January 2008 Major-General Aleksandr Khlevnyuk, head of personnel directorate of the Border Guard Service says that in 2008 the Service will completely switch over to contract manning.

14 January 2008 Vladimir Putin meets the government. They discuss the development of military training centres at civilian higher education establishments. They also discuss combining national projects with MOD programmes.

14 January 2008 About 1,000 activists of the Nashi youth movement have held an authorized protest against the ban on Nashi activists' entry to the European Union. It is held near the European Commission representative office in Moscow.

15 January 2008 An MOD source states that after a break of many years, modern military hardware and armaments will take part in the military parade of the troops of the Moscow Garrison in Red Square in Moscow to mark Victory Day (9 May).

16 January 2008 Drugaya Rossiya calls for the dissolution of the Duma. It states that the 2 December 2007 Duma election was rigged.

16 January 2008 The Duma introduces amendments to its regulations, according to which the leaders of subgroups of the Yedinaya Rossiya (YR) parliamentary faction will in effect be put on an equal footing with the leaders of Duma factions. The new regulation states that groups of at least 50 deputies may be formed within factions that number more than 100 deputies. In YR, four subgroups have been created, led by Vladimir Pekhtin, Tatyana Yakovleva, Artur Chilingarov and Valery Ryazansky, who in effect are equal to leaders of factions.

16 January 2008 Lukoil head Vagit Alekperov briefs Vladimir Putin on the progress of the Caspian offshore oilfields development. In 2009, Lukoil will produce 1.5 million tonnes of oil in this field. The overall capacity of the field is about 10 million tonnes of oil and 12 billion cubic metres of gas a year.

LUKoil is also negotiating with Kazakhstan for exploration in the Caspian. Alekperov says: "Together with Mittal, we are negotiating with the government of Kazakhstan and Kazmunaigaz for the possibility of getting sectors in the Caspian for exploration."

16 January 2008 The Chechen Interior Ministry collegium assesses the results of its work in 2007. Interior Minister Ruslan Alkhanov states:

As a result of investigative work and special operations, 7 bandit groups were destroyed in Chechnya in 2007; 325 rebels, including one gang leader, were detained, and 72 rebels, including 11 gang leaders, were killed, while 139 members of bandit formations were led to give themselves up. Antiterrorism measures taken in Chechnya have reduced the number of registered terrorist attacks by 71.8 per cent.

17 January 2008 Two co-chairs of the All-Russian Civil Congress - the head of the Moscow Helsinki Group Lyudmila Alekseyeva and the president of the Indem Foundation Georgiy Satarov state they will resign as co-chairs. They are unwilling to work with the third co-chair of the Congress, United Civil Front leader Garry Kasparov.

17 January 2008 The head of Mikhail Kasyanov's election headquarters in Mari El has been detained on suspicion of forging voters' signatures on a massive scale.

17 January 2008 Dmitry Medvedev makes the following statement on Gazprom:

Gazprom, however trivial this may sound, is the backbone of the Russian economy. It is a unique company. There is nothing like it in the world. On the other hand, there is no other country like ours, as big as ours. If we were to break up Gazprom into pieces we would never have gas, or we would be buying it at the prices Europe's most remote countries which do not have a

single cubic metre of their own gas are buying it.

17 January 2008 An armed attack is made on the house of the Ingush prime minister in Nazran.

17 January 2008 Prime Minister Viktor Zubkov says by 2015 about R106.4 billion (\$4.35 billion) will have been spent on the nano-technology programme. In 2008 about R20 billion will be spent on the programme.

17 January 2008 It is reported that the MOD is considering plans to increase the number of ground force colleges and cadet corps for young people. In 1995, the president (i.e. Boris Yel'tsin) signed order No. 155 expanding the network of these military educational establishments. There are now 17 such schools in the Defence Ministry, including eight ground force colleges, one naval college, the Moscow military music college, and also seven cadet corps. About 8,000 pupils study there.

18 January 2008 Commanders have been replaced in two armies of the Ground Forces, one stationed in the Moscow Military District and the other in the Volga-Urals Military District. Major-General Oleg Makarevich replaces Lt General Sergey Skokov as commander of the 2nd Army (headquartered in Samara) of the Volga-Urals Military District. Major-General Sergey Yudin has been appointed the commander of the 22nd Army (headquartered in Nizhny Novgorod) of the Moscow District instead of Lt General Igor Bronitsky.

18 January 2008 The first deputy head of the MVD department for the fight against organized crime and terrorism, Yury Kokov, says in 2007, 48 terrorist acts were carried out in Russia, 35 of them in the Southern Federal District, and a quarter of these crimes were committed in Kabarda-Balkaria.

19 January 2008 Chief of the General Staff Army Gen Yury Baluyevsky speaks at an academic conference of the Academy of Military Sciences. He says Russia needs to develop a strategy to guarantee national security that should be endorsed by the Russian president and be binding for all branches of power. "The effectiveness of the national security system should be provided by a special document, or a strategy for guaranteeing national security, which is endorsed by the supreme commander and be binding for all state organs, including security agencies."

The Commander-in-Chief of the Air Force Colonel-General Aleksandr Zelin states that almost all Russian territory could become vulnerable to the air and space weapons of foreign states by 2020:

Analysis of the development of air and space weapons of foreign states shows that radical changes will take place due to the development of air and space as a single sphere of armed combat in the period up to 2020...And it is precisely in this period that the 'main' foreign states will bring into service fundamentally new means and systems, hyperacoustic and air-space vehicles, and unmanned reconnaissance vehicles.

19 January 2008 The leader of the People's Democratic Union, former Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov, complains of pressure from law-enforcement agencies. He says that the coordinated operation of units of the Interior and Justice ministries began after he submitted his papers for registration with the Central Electoral Commission (CEC).

19 January 2008 First Deputy Interior Minister Colonel-General Aleksandr

Chekalin says that in 2007, the number of terrorist acts more than halved in Russia compared with 2006: "The number of terrorist acts has fallen by 57 per cent in 2007. There were 48 terrorist attacks, 38 of them have been cleared up." He says over 80 international extremist Wahhabi organizations are operating in Russia. He also says up to 15 per cent of Russian youth are affected by nationalistic sentiments. According to the Interior Ministry, 139 race-hate criminal investigations were launched in 2004, 152 in 2005, 263 in 2006 and 356 in 2007.

19 January 2008 Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov makes major staff and structural changes in the republican government. The secretary of the republic's Security Council, Khalid Vaynakhov, is appointed first deputy chairman of the government in charge of security agencies. Kadyrov also abolishes the Chechen Security Council.

21 January 2008 Aleksandr Fedorov, deputy director of the Federal Service for Control over the Illegal Trafficking of Narcotics, says that there are currently 350,000 registered drug addicts in Russia. Fedorov states that the real number of drug addicts usually exceeds the number of those registered by five to seven times, meaning that the real number of drug addicts in Russia might be 2 to 2.5 million.

21 January 2008 The commander of the troops of the Special-Purpose Command (Moscow air defence), Colonel-General Yury Solovyev, says Russia needs antimissiles able to destroy targets in near space.

The first deputy chairman of the military-industrial commission under the Russian government, Vladislav Putilin, says that the financial and economic positions of many strategic enterprises of the domestic defence industry remain unsatisfactory. He states:

Only 36 per cent of the strategic defence industry enterprises have good financial and economic positions while 25 per cent of them are on the verge of bankruptcy. The defence industry's volume of production increased by 14 per cent in 2007, including a 19-per-cent increase in the production of military goods. However, some enterprises cannot produce defence-related goods of the appropriate quality. The plans for the creation of integrated structures in the defence industry were not being implemented. Out of the 37 structures planned to be created by the end of 2007, only 16 have been fully established.

21 January 2008 The head of the Russian presidential administration, Sergey Sobyenin, is appointed chief of the election headquarters of presidential candidate Dmitry Medvedev.

22 January 2008 First Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev makes a keynote speech at the All-Russian Civic Forum.

22 January 2008 The CEC says it has found 15.5 per cent of signatures submitted in support of Mikhail Kasyanov's nomination as candidate in the presidential election faulty. This is rejected by Kasyanov.

A VTsIOM poll shows that around 60 per cent of Russians that plan to take part in the 2 March presidential election intend to vote for Dmitry Medvedev. Of the 1,600 people polled in 46 regions of Russia on 12-13 January, 60.4 per cent plan to vote for Medvedev, 7.5 per cent for Liberal Democratic Party of Russia leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, and 6.1 per cent for Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF) leader Gennady Zyuganov. Of the two remaining candidates whose registration is yet to be officially approved, former Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov

would receive 0.8 per cent of the vote, while Democratic Party of Russia leader Andrey Bogdanov would receive 0.2 per cent.

22 January 2008 Deputy Chief of the General Staff Colonel-General Vasily Smirnov has said that due to the length of the compulsory military service being reduced to 12 months, from next autumn the Armed Forces will be drafting twice as many people as now, 250,000.

22 January 2008 Several activists of the youth movement Rossiya Molodaya are detained in Moscow during a demonstration at the European Commission building. They are protesting about Kosovo.

22 January 2008 Air Force Commander-in-Chief Colonel-General Aleksandr Zelin says Russia is implementing the blueprint of aerospace defence up to 2016. He says: 'Currently, there are appropriate decisions regarding the formation of national aerospace defence, on transferring to the single command of the main forces dealing with air defence, missile and therefore aerospace defence'. He says that the analysis of the development of the air and space strike force of foreign states shows that by the year 2010 fundamental changes will take place involving the use of air and space as an integrated combat area.

At that time the armed forces of the main foreign states will commission absolutely new weapons: hypersonic and aerospace craft, reconnaissance and strike aircraft and weapons using new physical principles. Reconnaissance, communication, navigation and control components will be integrated into the single information-reconnaissance control system. Methods of using troops will undergo qualitative changes too.

In this situation "the adversary will be able to make high-precision strikes coordinated in time and space on virtually every target in Russia".

22 January 2008 Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov says that "so far, 99 per cent of gunmen have been destroyed or laid down their arms during the amnesties". He says there are a "few dozen" gunmen remaining in the mountains who would be eliminated this winter.

23 January 2008 CEC head Vladimir Churov says that it may be necessary to refuse to register Mikhail Kasyanov as a presidential candidate. This is because after checking more than half of the signatures supporting his nomination, the share of rejected ones was 13 per cent (only 5 per cent is permitted). These were the results of the checking of the second batch of signatures in support of Kasyanov. After the first check, the share of rejected signatures was 15 per cent.

23 January 2008 A Levada Centre poll shows an 82 per cent poll rating for Dmitry Medvedev.

23 January 2008 Rosstat gives the following information on energy production in 2007. Russia produced 491 million tonnes of crude oil (including gas condensate), up 2.1 per cent year-on-year. Gas production was 651 billion cu.m., down 0.8 per cent. Coal production in 2007 was 31.5 million tonnes, up 1.4 per cent. Electricity production rose by 2 per cent in 2007 to 1,016 billion kWh. Of this total, nuclear power stations produced 160 billion (up 2.3 per cent); thermal power stations 677 billion (up 2 per cent); and hydroelectric power stations 179 billion (also up 2 per cent).

23 January 2008 First Deputy Prime Minister Sergey Ivanov criticizes the implementation of the GLONASS project. "The existing GLONASS constellation does not yet provide 100-per-cent availability of GLONASS services on the entire territory of the Russian Federation, and the accuracy parameters do not meet the modern requirements. The required reliability of the spacecraft's equipment has not been reached yet."

Ivanov says that the construction of the new cosmodrome Vostochnyy in Amur Region should be given top priority. At present Russia uses the Baykonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan to launch manned spacecraft. Amur Region governor Nikolay Kolesov signed a decree to set up an interdepartmental scientific-production commission for the development of space activities in the region. By 2015, launch vehicles of medium to heavy class should be launched from Vostochnyy. Manned launches are planned to begin as of 2018.

23 January 2008 A naval exercise ends in the Atlantic Ocean.

24 January 2008 The CEC receives objections from representatives of former Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov to the results of the checking of signatures in support of Kasyanov's standing in the presidential election.

The CEC registers Democratic Party of Russia leader Andrey Bogdanov as a presidential candidate.

The secretary of the CEC, Nikolay Konkin, says invitations to the Russian presidential election will be sent to about 400 international observers, including the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).

CPRF leader Gennady Zyuganov says that the party "is considering" removing him from the presidential race.

Leader of the United Civil Front Garry Kasparov confirms that work is underway to set up a new pro-democracy group.

24 January 2008 First Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev says that Russia should remain a presidential republic with a strong executive. Medvedev announces that Russia is a strong nuclear power with high technological and human potential and it is necessary to retain these qualities.

Medvedev says that Russia has every chance to regain the status of the leading agrarian power. He says Russia's agricultural output grew 15 per cent in 2007.

Medvedev says that an agreement has been reached to speed up the construction of houses for the military.

24 January 2008 Prime Minister Viktor Zubkov orders the creation of a special working group to control inflation. The group will be led by the deputy prime minister Finance Minister Aleksey Kudrin, with the economic development and trade minister, Elvira Nabiullina, and the agriculture minister, Aleksey Gordeyev, acting as his deputies.

Prime Minister Viktor Zubkov appoints Dmitry Pankin as deputy finance minister. Previously Pankin headed the Finance Ministry's department for international financial relations, government debt and state financial assets.

24 January 2008 Sakhalin Region governor Aleksandr Khoroshavin says that a

record 14 million tonnes of oil and 6 billion cubic metres of natural gas were produced in Sakhalin in 2007. Crude oil production has more than doubled compared with 2006, as the Sakhalin-1 project has come on stream.

25 January 2008 Moscow police arrest organised crime boss Sergey Shnayder, aka Semen Mogilevich.

25 January 2008 An independent public organization is set up in Russia to unite civil society activists. It is called the Civil Coalition to Defend the Constitution. One of the organization's initiators is head of the Moscow Helsinki group Lyudmila Alekseyeva.

25 January 2008 First Deputy Prime Minister Sergey Ivanov says that special economic zones will make it possible for Russia to "overcome its oil addiction".

25 January 2008 Agriculture Minister Aleksey Gordeyev says the unstable situation on the financial markets is threatening Russia's State Programme for Development of Agriculture from 2008-12.

25 January 2008 The MOD says that a unified space system will be deployed in Russia by 2012.

25 January 2008 The Federal Security Service (FSB) declares parts of Ingushetia a counterterrorist operation zone.

25 January 2008 Head of the FSB Novosibirsk Region department Sergey Savchenkov says that foreign special services are paying great attention to research and development by Novosibirsk scientists.

25 January 2008 Commander of the Space Troops Colonel-General Vladimir Popovkin says that in the near future Russia's Space Troops plan to stop using all radar stations located abroad. Russia has radar stations in Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Belarus. He goes on to say he doubts whether the USA's planned missile defences in Eastern Europe are really deployed against Iran. He says that Russia will not aim to create a global missile defence system.

26 January 2008 Gennady Zyuganov says he will run for president.

26 January 2008 An opposition rally in Nazran, Ingushetia is broken up by the police.

27 January 2008 The CEC refuses to register Mikhail Kasyanov as a candidate. The final list of candidates is:

Dmitry Medvedev nominated by Yedinaya Rossiya
Gennady Zyuganov, CPRF
Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, LDPR
Andrey Bogdanov, leader of the Democratic Party of Russia.

Kasyanov blames Vladimir Putin for the fact he has not been registered.

27 January 2008 United Energy Systems chief Anatoly Chubais warns against calls for greater state involvement in the economy and isolationism if Russia's oil, gas and other raw material revenues were to fall due to a global recession.

28 January 2008 The MOD reports that 54 servicemen of the Russian armed forces died in Chechnya in 2007.

29 January 2008 First Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev says the accessibility and quality of social services in Russia should be improved. He is addressing the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia.

29 January 2008 The leadership of the Nashi movement denies reports that preparations are being made to gradually wind down the youth project.

29 January 2008 The Duma defence committee chairman, Colonel-General Viktor Zavarzin, says that over the past six years national defence spending in Russia has increased by more than 3.5 times. "Currently our defence spending has exceeded R1,000 billion (about 40.85 billion dollars)."

30 January 2008 Vladimir Putin says that Russia will not allow the course of the presidential campaign in the country to be affected from outside.

The website of presidential candidate First Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev is set up on the Internet. It is www.medvedev2008.ru

30 January 2008 Vladimir Putin instructs the special services to speed up the formation of a comprehensive system of counterterrorist security in the country. He addresses the FSB board.

The Interior Ministry Main Directorate of the Volga Federal District states that three illegal Hezb-e Tahrir cells have been disbanded in Tatarstan, Bashkortostan and Chuvashia.

The chairman of the Russian Supreme Court Vyacheslav Lebedev says the number of terrorism-related criminal cases in the courts doubled in 2007.

30 January 2008 Vladimir Putin calls for comprehensive environmental improvements in Russia at a Security Council meeting. Dmitry Medvedev says the government should set up a single environmental watchdog. Dmitry Medvedev outlines the government's environmental policy.

Three members of international environmental protection organization Bellona have been detained outside the Izotop plant in Kapitolovo, Leningrad Region.

30 January 2008 Aleksandr Brod, director of the Moscow Human Rights Bureau and a member of the Public Chamber, says that since the beginning of 2008, 14 people have been killed in xenophobia-related attacks in Russia.

30 January 2008 The Federation Council appoints Anatoly Petrochenkov deputy chairman of the Supreme Court.

30 January 2008 Deputy Prime Minister, Finance Minister Aleksey Kudrin says: "We shall have to define more clearly those of our foreign policy guidelines which will ensure the stability of investment and economy".

30 January 2008 The government of Nizhny Novgorod Region files a suit in the region's arbitration court demanding tax arrears from the regional branch of the British Council for use of premises in Nizhny Novgorod.

30 January 2008 The head of the Armed Forces Main Directorate for Combat

Training, Lt General Vladimir Shamanov, says over R230 billion (\$9.38 billion) will be allocated for military training in the Russian armed forces in 2008. Shamanov says that in 2008 for the first time ever the Russian armed forces will hold a tactical exercise with combined forces during which they will practise "the coordination of ground troop groups with the army and front line aviation, using high-precision weapons, such as the Tochka-U and, possibly, Iskander missile systems".

30 January 2008 Minister of Regional Development Dmitry Kozak states that the government plans to create seven to ten macroregions to facilitate economic development. "What we have in mind is seven to 10 macroregions that have common economic features, and in which, above all, policies specific to them can be carried out to develop their infrastructures with the long-term development forecasts in view."

30 January 2008 Konstantin Kosachev, chairman of the Duma International Affairs Committee, says he believes that demands by ODIHR that Moscow should extend the stay of the ODIHR observer mission in Russia during the presidential election are groundless.

31 January 2008 First Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev says that the proliferation of state corporations in Russia did not mean that the country was building a system of "state capitalism".

31 January 2008 The Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia issues a statement expressing concern over increasingly frequent manifestations of anti-Semitism.

31 January 2008 First Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev says GDP growth in 2007 was 8.1 per cent. The Ministry of Trade and Economic Development previously put GDP growth in 2007 at 7.7-7.8 per cent.

Medvedev outlines economic policy in a speech at the all-Russia forum of industrialists and entrepreneurs in Krasnodar Territory. He says Russia must continue to invest abroad.

Finance Minister Aleksey Kudrin outlines a set of measures to fight high inflation.

31 January 2008 The Agriculture Ministry says that a formal document, extending the price freezing deal for "socially vital food items" from 1 February till 1 May 2008, has been officially endorsed.

31 January 2008 Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov says that there remain only 60 to 70 rebels in the Chechen mountains. Kadyrov says that over \$4 billion dollars has been invested in Chechnya over the past two years and that over 130,000 people were provided with jobs in 2007.

31 January 2008 First Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces Lt General Aleksandr Burutin says the MOD is adjusting military construction plans for the Kaliningrad special district, and above all this concerns the Baltic Fleet.

Burutin addresses the 10th Russian forum on information security, "Information Solutions for Russia's Security". He emphasises the need for information independence and superiority. "In the foreseeable future, the final aims of wars and armed conflicts will be achieved not so much by destroying the troops and forces of an adversary, as by suppressing its state and military command, navigation and

communication systems, influencing other information facilities on which the stable government of a state depends."

31 January 2008 The Ministry of Economic Development and Trade predicts that inflation in the first and second quarters of 2008 will be higher than in the first and second quarters of 2007 respectively.

31 January 2008 First Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev says there is a need to finalise the system of delimitation of powers between authorities of various levels in the country.

31 January 2008 Head of the Investigations Committee Aleksandr Bastrykin reports on the work of his committee. Prosecutor-General Yury Chayka also addresses the heads of investigative departments of the Investigations Committee under the Prosecutor-General's Office.

February 2008

1 February 2008 First Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev says that in 2007, Russia registered the highest birth rate for over 25 years. Health and Social Development Minister Tatyana Golikova says that 1,602,387 children were born in 2007 in Russia - 122,077 more than in 2006. Thus, the number of births in 2007 was 11.3 per 1,000 as against 10.4 in 2006. She confirmed that the number of children born in 2007 was the highest in the past 25 years.

1 February 2008 Former Prime Minister and leader of the Russian People's Democratic Union Mikhail Kasyanov protests in the Supreme Court against the refusal by the CEC to register him as presidential candidate.

1 February 2008 Former Yukos head Mikhail Khodorkovsky writes a statement to the head of the Chita remand centre which says that he has gone on hunger strike.

1 February 2008 Sergey Ivanov chairs a governmental commission meeting on the transport system. He criticises the state of the system.

1 February 2008 The head of the State Committee on Youth Affairs and Nashi's ex-leader, Vasily Yakemenko, says the committee will do its best to preserve the youth movement Nashi and keep it united.

1 February 2008 It is announced that the Stabilization Fund is being reformed into two new funds: a Reserve Fund and a National Welfare Fund. The Stabilization Fund always played the role of a financial security cushion. By the end of January, the fund had collected around R4,000 billion. Most of the money is being transferred to the Reserve Fund.

1 February 2008 The government approves the concept of the federal targeted-development programme the National system of chemical and biological security of the Russian Federation for 2009-2013.

2 February 2008 The presidential election campaign officially starts.

Yedinaya Rossiya publishes its election programme in *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*.

2 February 2008 Human rights activists start an Internet campaign to support sick

Yukos case defendant Vasily Aleksanyan.

2 February 2008 Finance Minister Aleksey Kudrin says the Russian economy will continue to grow in 2008.

3 February 2008 The operations headquarters in Ingushetia decides to suspend the counter-terrorist operation that began in the republic on 25 January.

3 February 2008 *Zvezda TV* reports that the Northern Fleet's naval battle group headed by aircraft carrier cruiser Admiral Kuznetsov has successfully completed its expedition into the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea. Navy Commander in Chief Admiral Vladimir Vysotsky states:

Comrades of the Northern Fleet! More and more events that instil confidence in Russia's great future are happening in the modern history of our country. By right a large-scale exercise of Russian navy vessels in the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea is among such events. The current long expedition is taken by Russian and international public as a serious declaration by the Russian Federation of its final comeback to the World Ocean as one of the leading sea powers.

The head of the Duma Committee on Transport, Sergey Shishkarev, says Russian warships' successful cruise to the Atlantic and the Mediterranean proves the ability of the Russian Navy to defend the interests of the country far beyond its territorial waters. He says:

These interests are increasingly global for Russia today...Our ships, their crews and cargo need protection...convoy escort and search-and-rescue functions of Russian Navy warships, as well as their participation in the protection of offshore fields, peace-building and peacekeeping missions, maintaining quarantines and non-proliferation of certain weapons, are still in demand.

4 February 2008 CPRF leader Gennady Zyuganov says elections in Russia cannot be fair and honest.

4 February 2008 Vladimir Putin visits the Dagestani village of Botlikh, where the 33rd Motor-Rifle Mountain Brigade is stationed. He also visits Nalchik, where the 121st Task Force Regiment of the Interior Ministry's Internal Troops is located.

4 February 2008 The Gazprom board of directors approves Prime Minister Viktor Zubkov and Minister of Economic Development and Trade Elvira Nabiullina as candidates for the new line-up of the board.

4 February 2008 Prime Minister Viktor Zubkov issues an instruction releasing Sergey Kiriyyenko from the post of head of the Federal Atomic Energy Agency in connection with the dissolution of the agency. The Rosatom state corporation was set up earlier on the basis of the Federal Atomic Energy Agency, and all the enterprises of the defence and civilian parts of the Russian nuclear sector have been put under its management. Sergey Kiriyyenko was appointed head of the Rosatom state corporation on 12 December 2007. The duties of head of the federal agency until its dissolution will be performed by Ivan Kamenskikh. The state corporation will start operating in the first half of 2008.

5 February 2008 The Supreme Court upholds the decision of the Central Electoral

Commission which denied registration to Mikhail Kasyanov as a candidate in the presidential election.

5 February 2008 Lawyer Boris Kuznetsov, who is suspected of divulging state secrets, claims political asylum in the USA.

5 February 2008 Ravil Geniatulin is appointed the first governor of the merged Transbaykal Territory (comprising Chita Region and the Agin Buryat Autonomous Area).

5 February 2008 Semen Levi, deputy head of Rosprirodnadzor, is appointed fourth deputy minister of natural resources. Levi will be in charge of the environmental issues concerning the use of natural resources and the ministry's international activities.

5 February 2008 The Nizhny Novgorod branch of the British Council pays the Nizhny Novgorod Region rent arrears for premises occupied. The regional government drops its court case against the British Council.

6 February 2008 Vladimir Putin addresses a meeting of the MVD board on the work of the MVD.

Interior Minister Rashid Nurgaliev addresses a session of the MVD board. He says in 2007 48 terrorist attacks were carried out in Russia while police managed to prevent 78 terrorist attacks in the Southern Federal District. He says that 67 organized crime groups were destroyed.

Deputy Interior Minister Colonel-General Arkady Yedelev says up to 440 rebels remain active in Chechnya. He says the activities of 17 extremist groups were stopped in Chechnya in 2007. The number of terrorist acts in the Southern Federal District has gone down by over 66 per cent. However, 11 terrorist acts were committed in Chechnya.

6 February 2008 Colonel-General Nikolay Solovtsov, Commander of the Strategic Missile Troops, writes an article in *Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kuryer* on the nuclear deterrent.

7 February 2008 The Union of Rightist Forces Federal Political Council calls for a boycott of the presidential election.

Aleksandr Brod, director of the Moscow Human Rights Bureau and a member of the Public Chamber says several international human rights organizations will be invited to take part in the monitoring of the presidential election.

7 February 2008 First Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev calls for a regional programme to stimulate the birth rate in the Far East and attract people to the region. He is visiting Khabarovsk.

Medvedev says Russia should adopt a system to fight corruption, not just introduce amendments to legislation.

7 February 2008 The Federal Penal Service states that former Yukos vice-president Vasily Aleksanyan accused of embezzlement and misappropriation of funds, will be put in a specialized clinic after all. He has been diagnosed with several incurable illnesses, including cancer and AIDS.

7 February 2008 Major-General Vladimir Shappo, chief of the Main Military Medical Directorate, says in 2007 over 25,000 servicemen were dismissed from the armed forces early for medical reasons. A total of 21,000 conscripts and about 7,000 officers were dismissed from the armed forces for medical reasons in 2006. Fifty-two per cent of conscripts enter the armed forces with certain medical restrictions.

7 February 2008 The FSB says a regional special-purpose service has been established at the Border Service of the FSB in the North Caucasus to combat transborder crime and prevent possible breakthroughs by illegal armed groups.

8 February 2008 The RBK business news website reports that by the end of 2008, Russia will have about 40.3 million Internet users, with a level of Internet saturation of 28.6 per cent, which will make Russian Europe's second largest Internet market after Germany. According to RBK, Russia will overtake Germany in Internet usage in 2010, when it will have 50.4 million Internet users, compared to 49.8 million in Germany.

8 February 2008 Vladimir Putin gives a speech to the State Council on Russia's development strategy to 2020.

9 February 2008 Yabloko says it will boycott the presidential election.

10 February 2008 Mikhail Kasyanov calls for a boycott of the 2 March presidential election.

11 February 2008 Chief Military Prosecutor Sergey Fridinsky says sixteen generals were sentenced in 2007 for crimes with gainful intent.

11 February 2008 Vladimir Putin says the state will continue controlling the situation in Gazprom. He says Gazprom should seek new foreign markets: "While increasing its share in the European direction, Gazprom should more actively seek new markets of natural gas, including those in the Asia-Pacific Region, North America and other continents".

11 February 2008 A draft law requiring websites to register as media organisations is put forward in the Federation Council by Vladimir Slutsker.

11 February 2008 The first deputy head of the Federal Migration Service (FMS), Vladimir Kalanda, says in 2007 28,000 foreign nationals were expelled from Russia and 56 deported.

Kalanda says that in 2007 the FMS issued 2.14 million work permits to foreigners, which is 270 per cent more than in 2006. The largest number of migrant workers, about 500,000, arrived from Ukraine, followed by Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Moldova in descending order. He says "more than half of the migrant workers are illegal." In 2007 the regional quota on foreign workers was set at 6 million people, in 2008 it is only 2 million.

Kalanda says that Russia has issued over 145,000 biometric international passports. The total number of international passports issued by FMS in 2007 was 4.5 million. Every eight to nine out of every 10 Russian citizens have an international passport.

In 2007, Russian citizenship was granted to 370,000 foreign immigrants, most of

them coming from the CIS countries.

A simplified procedure is in force according to which citizens of CIS countries can apply for Russian citizenship by presenting their old Soviet passports. The deadline for such applications has been extended till 1 January 2009.

11 February 2008 The deputy general director of Rostekhnologiya state-owned corporation, Nikolay Volobuyev, says the income of the Rosoboroneksport federal state unitary enterprise in 2007 amounted to \$7 billion. In 2006 Rosoboroneksport exported military output worth \$5.3 billion.

12 February 2008 FSB Director Nikolay Patrushev says a "blueprint for countering terrorism" has been drafted as part of the implementation of the Antiterror (2005-2007) federal targeted-development programme.

12 February 2008 Boris Nemtsov says he has suspended his membership with the URF party.

12 February 2008 First Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev says he thinks that it is necessary to adjust the Russian system of cadet education. He says more patriotic films should be made and that it is necessary to pay attention to the creation of patriotic channels and internet sites.

13 February 2008 Mikhail Kasyanov appeals against the Supreme Court ruling that upheld the CEC's refusal to register Kasyanov as a presidential candidate.

13 February 2008 First Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev says Russia should ensure its food independence for the years ahead.

13 February 2008 Human Rights Ombudsman Vladimir Lukin presents to Vladimir Putin his report on the results of 2007 in the area of human rights.

14 February 2008 Vladimir Putin gives a major news conference reviewing Russia's achievements in 2007. He states:

The president is the guarantor of the constitution, he determines the main directions of internal and foreign policy of the head of state; but the highest executive body in the country is the Government of the Russian Federation headed by the chairman of the government. There are enough powers, and Dmitry Anatolyevich and I will distribute - if the voters let us and allow us to do it - in practical terms how to structure our personal relations.

He also states:

The post of Russian Federation government chairman cannot be a transitional one. It provides an opportunity to realize oneself and achieve major objectives the country sets itself. If it so happens, I will of course put as much effort into the job as I have done in the post of Russian Federation president.

14 February 2008 The Ministry of Health and Social Development releases figures on the population of Russia. It states that as of 1 December 2007 the population was 142 million, which was 0.22 million down on the beginning of the year, whereas a year ago the population of the country had declined by 0.52 million or 0.37 per cent.

14 February 2008 Anatoly Isaykin, head of Rosoboronexport, says Russian arms

exports totalled a record 7 billion dollars in 2007.

15 February 2008 Dmitry Medvedev makes a major policy speech at the Krasnoyarsk economic forum.

15 February 2008 Igor Yakovenko, the general secretary of the Russian Union of Journalists, says the only way to have free and independent media in Russia would be for the government to leave the media market.

15 February 2008 The Prosecutor-General's Office charges Leonid Nevzlin, former co-owner of the oil company Yukos, with several counts of murder.

15 February 2008 It is reported that a criminal investigation has been launched against the head of the Voice of Beslan Ella Kesayeva.

15 February 2008 The court of appeal of the Supreme Court acknowledges as lawful the CEC's refusal to register ex-Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov as a presidential candidate.

15 February 2008 Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Aleksey Kudrin says the rouble can become a hard currency in the next 4-5 years.

15 February 2008 Vladimir Putin and Defence Minister Anatoly Serdyukov discuss pay rises for the military.

Putin meets senior military officials in the Kremlin. He calls for a new long-term military development programme for the period to 2020.

Special attention should be paid to reforming military training. Thus, we intend to lay the foundation for several major military training centres, those of the Ground Troops, the navy and the air force. They should not only preserve the best traditions of the domestic personnel training system, but they should also use the best foreign experience. Today's students and young officers should possess knowledge to meet all modern demands. It is they who will determine the future of the Russian armed forces.

15 February 2008 The Council of Muftis of Russia says a ban on religious literature is a sign of the restoration of censorship.

15 February 2008 The Finance Ministry states that Russia's foreign debt declined 14.6 per cent in 2007 to \$44.4 billion as of 1 January 2008. New Russian debt (obligations accrued after 1992) came to \$37.2 billion, while the rest (\$7.2 billion) was debt inherited from the Soviet Union.

17 February 2008 A rally in support of "political prisoners" takes place in Slavyanskaya Ploshchad in central Moscow. No incidents take place.

18 February 2008 A Russian Jewish Congress project states that the total number of anti-Semitic incidents in Russia in 2007 was 101, which was 44 per cent down on the number recorded in 2006 (181).

18 February 2008 The Emergencies Ministry directorate for Moscow asks the court to suspend the operation of the Union of Journalists of Russia for 90 days for breaches of fire regulations at their HQ.

18 February 2008 Rosstat states that Russian oil production in 2007 amounted to 490.7 million tonnes, up 2.1 per cent compared to 2006.

18 February 2008 First Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev says small business should generate no less than 50 per cent of GDP.

18 February 2008 Ground Troops commander Army Gen Aleksey Maslov says over 30 permanent readiness formations and units will be additionally set up in the Ground Troops by 2010. The Ground Troops currently have about 60 permanent readiness formations and units manned by 100,000 contract servicemen.

A command-and-staff mobilization exercise of the units deployed in the North Caucasus Military District starts in Kabarda-Balkaria.

The informational service of the Rear Services of the Armed Forces says the Armed Forces need more than 3,170,000 tonnes of fuel in 2008 as a minimum, which is worth more than R43 billion (\$1.72 billion). It has been planned to buy over 1,200,000 tonnes of air kerosene, including 1,050,000 tonnes for the Air Force. The total volume of the fuel to be purchased in 2008 will be 11 per cent up on 2007.

18 February 2008 Georgiy Satarov, president of the Indem Foundation outlines scenarios for post-Putin Russia in *New Times*.

19 February 2008 Prosecutor-General Yury Chayka calls on the law-enforcement agencies to step up work to cut off the funding of terrorism in Russia. He says there is no, and cannot be, any rivalry between the Prosecutor-General's Office and the Investigations Committee under the Prosecutor-General's Office.

19 February 2008 CEC member Gennady Raykov says the electoral bodies of the USA and a number of EU countries have informed the CEC about their refusal to come to Russia to monitor the presidential election.

19 February 2008 A council of NGOs is set up in the Chechen republic under the republic's ombudsman.

19 February 2008 Former commander-in-chief of the navy and current adviser to the minister of defence Admiral Vladimir Masorin says the Navy should maintain a regular presence in the areas of the world ocean that are most important for Russia's national security. "Unfortunately, for the time being we cannot maintain a permanent presence in the world ocean, but our ships should regularly visit the most important areas for us - the Mediterranean, the Asia-Pacific region and the Atlantic."

20 February 2008 Vladimir Putin signs a decree "On the national aircraft construction centre". Putin and Dmitry Medvedev visit the site of the future aircraft construction centre in Zhukovsky, Moscow Region.

20 February 2008 Andrey Klepach and Stanislav Voskresensky have been appointed Deputy Economic Development and Trade Ministers by Prime Minister Viktor Zubkov.

20 February 2008 Former Atomic Energy Minister Yevgenny Adamov is sentenced to five and a half years in prison. Adamov was guilty of misappropriation of funds and abuse of office.

20 February 2008 The executive director of the Human Rights Watch organization,

Kenneth Roth, says that the Russian authorities have denied him an entry visa.

20 February 2008 The Federation Council approves the head of the Commission on Development of Civil Society Institutions and its members.

20 February 2008 Finance Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Aleksey Kudrin says the government will be able to reduce inflation to 8.5 per cent in 2008.

Kudrin is elected chairman of the financial and economic policy council of the member states of Eurasec, and Economic Development and Trade Minister Elvira Nabiullina is elected co-chairman.

20 February 2008 A Levada Centre poll reveals that one in two Russians believe that Russia currently faces a military threat from other countries. Over the last three years, the proportion of Russians that have confidence in the combat readiness of the modern Russian army has risen from 52 per cent to 73 per cent. The proportion of Russians against military service has fallen accordingly: from 75 per cent in 2000 to 53 per cent. Some 48 per cent of Russians are currently in favour of the army switching to contract service, while 45 per cent prefer to maintain conscript service, the report also said.

22 February 2008 An activist of the United Civil Front, Yury Osotov, who has distributed publicity material for the Dissenters' March planned for 3 March in St Petersburg, is been detained in the city.

22 February 2008 Lt General Nikolay Ignatov, who was until now deputy commander of the Airborne Troops, is appointed the new chief of staff of the Airborne Troops - first deputy commander of troops. The former chief of staff was Lt General Valery Yevtukhovich, who was appointed commander of the Airborne Troops in November 2007.

25 February 2008 The leader of the all-Russia "Movement in Support of Army, Defence Industry, and Military Science", Duma deputy Viktor Ilyukhin, is interviewed in *Pravda* on the state of the armed forces.

26 February 2008 Dmitry Medvedev discusses social policy in Ufa.

26 February 2008 The work of the European University in St.Petersburg is halted in connection with fire regulations.

26 February 2008 Deputy Defence Minister for financial and economic activity Lyubov Kudelina says the total spending of the MOD will amount to some R1,000 billion (over \$40 billion) in 2008. This is almost a 20-per cent increase against 2007. MOD spending will be R959.6 billion in 2008, R1,061.5 billion in 2009 and R1,191 billion in 2010. In 2008-2010, the Defence Ministry spending in the structure of the federal budget expenditure will remain at more or less the same level: 15.5-16 per cent.

27 February 2008 Dmitry Medvedev says: "If I am entrusted with running the state, I vow to continue the course which has proved its effectiveness, the course set by President Putin...If we continue to work as a team, the two of us, we will be able to do good to the state." He says Russia needs the sort of stability that Western Europe had after WW2. He states:

We need decades of stable development. If I am entrusted with running the

state, I will be simply obligated to continue the course which has proved its effectiveness over the last eight years, the course set by President Putin. If we continue to work as a team, the two of us, this should do some good for our state. The main thing is that everything positive that has been accumulated over the past few years will be preserved. I think that this continuity is a certain guarantee of the fulfilment of these obligations.

... We do not need to opt for a two-party system; in the USA this system has been created for centuries. We need our own system, events will take their course. It is important to have parties that are functioning so as not to be ashamed of party officials, as the case was before, so that for a person who becomes a party official it was not a kind of a spring-board for their career.

He says the present election system is aimed at strengthening the party system in the country: "Today there are five to seven parties in the country which have real interests behind them and this is good."

Medvedev says he is against NGOs being financed only from abroad. "It is inappropriate when they receive funds from abroad. There is nothing bad about this, but we have a strong state, so public organizations should also be strong, and the state should maintain these organizations on its own."

27 February 2008 The Strategic Missile Troops commander, Colonel-General Nikolay Solovtsov, says they will continue re-armament with mobile and silo-based Topol-M missile systems in 2008. The Troops will receive in 2008 11 Topol-M ICBMs. Solovtsov says that they currently have 73 per cent of the training equipment and materials they need and that 76 per cent of the required combat training is being ensured.

First Deputy Prime Minister Sergey Ivanov says that if urgent steps are not taken, 90 per cent of the military transport aviation fleet will be decommissioned by 2015.

27 February 2008 Natalia Morar, a Moldovan journalist employed at the Moscow headquarters of *The New Times*, is arrested by immigration officials on arriving at Moscow's Domodedovo on a flight from Moldova in her first attempt to return to Russia since she was expelled in December.

28 February 2008 Vladimir Putin addresses the Council for National Priority Projects. He says creating an efficient welfare system and solving remaining social issues is the most important task for all levels of power in Russia. He says that the overwhelming majority of tasks set as part of the projects have been accomplished. He praises Dmitry Medvedev for his work on the national projects.

Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev gives a speech on the national priority projects. He says: "First of all, the average life expectancy has begun to rise. It now increases by one year every year. Over two years, the death rate has fallen by almost 10 per cent. The death rate for the working-age population has fallen by 20 per cent compared with 2005. The birth rate has increased by almost 10 per cent."

29 February 2008 Andrey Illarionov, Vladimir Putin's former economic adviser and senior researcher at the Cato Institute (USA) says the presidential election on 2 March will not be legitimate.

29 February 2008 Prime Minister Viktor Zubkov says it is important to prevent controlling agencies' pressure and unlawful actions as regards small businesses.

29 February 2008 The Prosecutor-General's Office says it will continue to insist on the extradition from Britain of Andrey Azarov, the managing director of the former Yukos subsidiary oil-shipping company Volgotanker AMS.

29 February 2008 Vladimir Putin signs a decree "On the federal state enterprise research test centre of the missile and space industry".

29 February 2008 An article by Kira Latukhina in *Vedomosti* considers who may be promoted under the new presidency.

March 2008

1 March 2008 The new constituent part of the federation, Transbaykal Territory, officially comes into existence. Chita Region merges with the Agin Buryat Autonomous Area. The area will have a special status as part of the territory: the Agin Buryat Autonomous Area will preserve its own power structures in its territory.

2 March 2008 Vladimir Putin gives an address urging people to come and vote in the presidential election.

The presidential election takes place. The results are:

Candidate	Votes	%
Dmitry Medvedev	52,530,712	70.28
Gennady Zyuganov	13,243,550	17.72
Vladimir Zhirinovskiy	6,988,510	9.35
Andrey Bogdanov	968,344	1.30

Invalid ballots 1,015,533 (1.35% ballots cast)

Total votes: 73,731,116 (Turnout 67.67%)

Vladimir Putin and Dmitry Medvedev address supporters in Red Square to celebrate Medvedev's victory in the presidential election.

2 March 2008 Spravedlivaya Rossiya (SR) leader Sergey Mironov says that the SR is having talks with the Agrarian Party regarding a possible merger.

3 March 2008 Duma speaker Boris Gрызлов says on the presidential election:

The Russian citizens have supported the course of Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin, the course that has been pursued in the last eight years. At one of the recent meetings Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin voiced the strategy of the country's development for the period until 2020. Thus we can plan rather far ahead relying on the support of our voters, on the support of the Russians, their support for Putin's course.

3 March 2008 member of the CEC Valery Kryukov says that Yedinaya Rossiya (YR) has won regional parliamentary elections in 11 constituent parts of the Russian Federation. In Bashkortostan YR won 91.67 per cent of votes; in Ingushetia, 74.09 per cent; in Kalmykia, 66.67 per cent; in Altay Territory, 55.88 per cent; in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), 48.57 per cent, in Amur Region, 69.44 per cent; in Ivanovo Region, 66.67 per cent; in Rostov Region, 90 per cent. In Sverdlovsk

Region, the party won 60.71 per cent in the regional дума and 100 per cent in the region's house of representatives. YR also won the elections in Ulyanovsk Region (80 per cent of the vote) and in Yaroslavl Region (over 50 per cent).

About 800 people gather for a "dissenters' march" in the centre of St Petersburg. National Bolshevik leader Eduard Limonov and United Civil Front leader Garry Kasparov join the protest.

Ekho Moskvy radio reports that about 50 activists and organizers of the "dissenters' march" have been detained in Moscow.

URF leader Nikita Belykh and human rights activist Lev Ponomarev are released from detention in connection with their participation in the march.

3 March 2008 Aleksandr Konovalov discusses Dmitry Medvedev's relationship with the armed forces in *Ogonek*.

4 March 2008 The head of the CEC, Vladimir Churov, admits that students were put under pressure during the presidential election.

4 March 2008 The speaker of the Federation Council, Sergey Mironov, states: "Both the Russian constitution and the fundamentals of our national identity and our historical experience deny the possibility of a technical president. There never was one, and there cannot be one."

4 March 2008 Prime Minister Viktor Zubkov appoints Deputy Prime Minister Aleksandr Zhukov as head of the permanent Council for the Development of Small Business under the government.

4 March 2008 Police Colonel Ruslan Gitinov is appointed new head of the antiterrorist centre of the Department of Regional Security of the Interior Ministry Main Directorate for the Southern Federal District.

4 March 2008 Human rights Russian ombudsman Vladimir Lukin says that the human rights situation in Russia has not changed significantly over the past couple of years.

5 March 2008 Roskosmos head Anatoly Perminov says Russia does not plan to stop using the Baykonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan after the construction of the Vostochnyy spaceport in Amur Region is completed.

5 March 2008 It is reported that the government is to extend the current export taxes for grain till early July. The Agriculture Ministry's interventional grain fund for 2008 will be set at between 2.5-5 million tonnes, depending on the market behaviour. It is expected that the 2008 grain harvest will be several million tonnes larger than in 2007, which was around 80 million tonnes.

5 March 2008 Rosatom and Rosnanotekh sign an agreement on cooperation in nanotechnology.

5 March 2008 An article in *Krasnaya Zvezda* by Aleksandr Babin outlines defence spending for 2008.

6 March 2008 Vladimir Putin signs a decree defining Dmitry Medvedev's status. From now on, he is the newly elected president who has not yet taken office. Before the inauguration the presidential administration must ensure the work of the

incumbent president, Vladimir Putin, as well as the next one, Dmitry Medvedev.

6 March 2008 Viktor Zubkov says that monopolies are hindering the development of small businesses.

Dmitry Medvedev says that the government is aiming that by 2020, 70 per cent of the population will be people of medium wealth.

6 March 2008 Sverdlovsk Region militia break up three radical nationalist criminal organizations, ZIG 88, Patrioty and Volkssturm.

7 March 2008 An official website for President-elect Dmitry Medvedev (<http://rost.ru/medvedev>) starts to operate.

8 March 2008 Vladimir Putin hints that Mikhail Khodorkovsky may be pardoned.

11 March 2008 Vladimir Putin has a meeting with Yabloko leader Grigory Yavlinsky.

11 March 2008 Vladimir Putin and present-elect Dmitry Medvedev discuss the concept of the country's development for the next 12 years with the leadership of the Duma. The speaker, Boris Gryzlov, his deputies and the leaders of Duma factions attend the meeting. Vladimir Putin formulated the main theses of the long-term programme at the last session of the State Council in February. The present cabinet must finalize and pass the document before May, that is, before the dissolution of the present government and the inauguration of the new president.

11 March 2008 Chechen president Ramzan Kadyrov criticizes Rosneft for plans to build a refinery in the neighbouring Kabarda-Balkaria to process Chechen oil.

11 March 2008 The press service of the president and government of the Chechen Republic states that the number of terrorist acts in Chechnya decreased by 72.5 per cent in 2007. Over that period, special units of the Interior Ministry and the Federal Security Service directorate for the Chechen Republic have neutralized 12 ringleaders of bandit groups and 60 militants. A total of 444 members of illegal armed groups and their accomplices have been detained, including 11 ringleaders. The resource potential of the bandit underground has been reduced significantly: 283 bases and 452 arms and explosives caches have been eliminated. A total of 378 small arms, 295 grenade launchers and more than 5,300 rounds for them, as well as 25 flamethrowers, 14 antitank rocket systems, about 1,000 hand grenades and 9,000 artillery shells and mines have been seized. Furthermore, more than a tonne of explosives, 12 kg of poisonous substances and more than 300,000 rounds of ammunition have also been seized. 202 improvised explosive devices have been rendered harmless. 472 members of illegal armed groups responded to an amnesty.

12 March 2008 At a meeting of the National Antiterrorist Committee FSB Director Nikolay Patrushev says Russia will introduce five terrorist threat levels. Patrushev says that the Foreign Ministry will set up a special centre which will coordinate the work of crisis HQs in Russian institutions abroad, to protect Russian citizens and organizations abroad. He says that the Anti-terrorism programme for 2009-2012 has been approved.

12 March 2008 Prime Minister Viktor Zubkov states that thirty new plants producing biofuel are to be created in Russia. From 2008 the Russian government intends to implement a programme to develop biofuel production in Russia, and

increase production to 2m tonnes per year.

12 March 2008 Ingush President Murat Zyazikov dismisses all levels of government in the Republic of Ingushetia. He says this is to speed up economic reform.

12 March 2008 The commander of the Main Directorate for Combat Training of the Russian Armed Forces Lt General Vladimir Shamanov says a reorganization of garrisons at Army and Navy level will start in the middle of 2008 in keeping with the new general military regulations of the Armed Forces.

13 March 2008 An article by Mikhail Tulsy in *Argumenty Nedeli* discusses who might be appointed to key positions in the Dmitry Medvedev administration.

13 March 2008 Lt General Vladimir Shamanov says the MOD believes it is premature to disband separate disciplinary battalions of the Russian army. Their disbandment will not start until 2011. In March 2007, the then head of the Main Directorate for Combat Training and Service, Lt General Aleksandr Lukin, told journalists that the Defence Ministry planned to disband disciplinary battalions by the end of the year.

The government sets up a federal state enterprise "The Defence Ministry construction procurement directorate" under the MOD. The enterprise will organize the placing of orders for state needs in the sphere of design and construction, major overhauls, upgrading and technical re-equipment of enterprises, buildings, including residential buildings, engineering networks and infrastructure. The new enterprise also oversees and organizes the performance of contracts, provides design and estimate documents, and the commissioning of facilities and buildings.

13 March 2008 Lev Ponomarev, leader of the For Human Rights movement is accused of libelling the director of the Russian Federal Penal Service, Yury Kalinin.

13 March 2008 Protests take place in Moscow supporting the leader of the St Petersburg branch of Yabloko, Maksim Reznik who has been arrested.

13 March 2008 The head of the Moscow Helsinki Group Lyudmila Alekseyeva says the law on non-commercial organizations should be repealed because it is undemocratic.

13 March 2008 Prime Minister Viktor Zubkov urges the Ministry of Information Technologies and Communication to speed up the creation of electronic government and the pace of the introduction of the electronic signature and electronic documents.

13 March 2008 A spokesman for the Moscow committee for interregional ties and ethnic policy, Olga Veldina says that Moscow will employ 300,000 foreign labour migrants in 2008.

13 March 2008 Nikolay Simakov, the republic's first deputy interior minister and criminal police chief, says police in Chechnya have neutralized 103 members of illegal armed groups since the beginning of the year.

14 March 2008 *Ekho Moskvyy* reports that law-enforcement officials in some regions are putting pressure on those that collected signatures in support of the presidential candidacy of former prime minister and People's Democratic Union leader Mikhail Kasyanov.

14 March 2008 The St Petersburg arts and scientific intelligentsia send an open letter to the country's leadership. They are asking that the arrested leader of the St Petersburg Yabloko party branch, Maksim Reznik, be released.

14 March 2008 Ingush President Murat Zyazikov appoints Kharum Dzeytov as prime minister.

14 March 2008 The Main Directorate of the Prosecutor-General's Office in the Southern Federal District says the number of gunmen and bandit formations in the North Caucasus has fallen fourfold compared with the beginning of 2007.

17 March 2008 The prosecutor's office of St Petersburg has approved a letter of accusation in the case of the founder in 1994 and chief editor of the *Rus Pravoslavnaya* newspaper, Konstantin Dushenov, who is suspected of carrying out activities aimed at inciting hatred and enmity on ethnic grounds: from January 2005 until mid-March 2007, Dushenov set up an organized group for the distribution of the film entitled "Russia with a Knife in its Back. Jewish Fascism and Genocide against the Russian People", as well as his article entitled "Russia with a Knife in its Back."

17 March 2008 Roskosmos states that the number of Glonass navigation system spacecraft used for designated purposes has increased to 15.

17 March 2008 The speaker of the Federation Council, Sergey Mironov, says the arrest of the leader of the St Petersburg branch of Yabloko, Maksim Reznik, is inappropriate.

A coordinator of the Oborona movement Eduard Glezin, who participated in an one-person picket in support of the leader of the St Petersburg branch of the Yabloko party, Maksim Reznik, as well as an activist of the Free Radicals movement, Pavel Nikitin, are detained near the MVD in Moscow.

17 March 2008 Vladimir Putin issues a decree on internet security.

The Prosecutor-General's Office believes that self-regulation and responsibility need to be introduced for internet service providers for the dissemination of extremist materials on the internet.

17 March 2008 Colonel-General Nikolay Solovtsov, the SMT commander says that "since 2004 spending on combat and mobilization training, maintenance, operation and repairs of weapons and military hardware of the Strategic Missile Troops has increased more than fivefold."

18 March 2008 Sergey Kovalev, human rights activist and chairman of Memorial, says threats to evict coordinator of the Oborona opposition movement Oleg Kozlovsky from his flat are "an obvious act of politically motivated police arbitrariness".

18 March 2008 Investigators search the office of the Chita centre for the support of civil initiatives which supports the cause of former Yukos head Mikhail Khodorkovsky.

18 March 2008 *Ekho Moskvy* reports that a new federal body to fight crime, modelled on the American FBI, will be set up in Russia in the autumn.

18 March 2008 The head of the State Committee for Youth Affairs, Vasily Yakemenko, denies reports on the intention of the state to abolish the Nashi youth organization.

19 March 2008 Dmitry Medvedev states that the Public Chamber should be more active in joining the work on the concept of Russia's long-term development. He also states:

It is clear that neglecting the law remains one of the main features of our social development and seriously hinders the development of our country. I have spoken about this more than once and we all together should make respect for the law a determining principle of the life of our country.

To do this, it is clear that our citizens should have real possibilities to defend their civil rights and responsibilities, to defend their honour in court, and this is related, in the end, with the effectiveness of the judicial system's work in our country.

Human rights ombudsman Vladimir Lukin delivers the annual report on human rights in Russia at the Federation Council. He expresses concern about the growing number of citizens' complaints against law-enforcement bodies.

19 March 2008 Investigative authorities carry out searches in the office of oil company TNK-BP in Moscow. Two employees of the TNK-BP company are questioned.

19 March 2008 Finance Minister Alexey Kudrin states in the Duma that: "Inflation remains the most important factor of instability, and the main task the government is facing is to ensure that inflation decreases, overcoming the trend of the unsuccessful year 2007." He also states that the Central Bank and the government have enough means to ensure the stability of the country's financial system. He says "the rate of economic growth this year will be at least 7 per cent, which will be ensured by the growth of the volume of credit, even in the situation of the world financial crisis".

19 March 2008 First Deputy Prime Minister Sergey Ivanov addresses the Federation Council on nanotechnology. He says it is necessary to develop a nanotechnology programme up to 2015.

19 March 2008 Prime Minister Viktor Zubkov expresses concern about bread prices in the Russian Far East.

19 March 2008 The head of Roskosmos, Anatoly Perminov, writing in *Izvestiya* says that Roskosmos plans to explore the Moon and Mars with the help of unmanned space vehicles over the next few years.

19 March 2008 An article in *Moskovsky Komsomolets* by Oleg Fochkin discusses the possibility of an FBI type organisation being set up in Russia.

19 March 2008 Dmitry Medvedev pledges support for the publication of an Orthodox Encyclopedia.

20 March 2008 The Investigations Committee under the Prosecutor-General's Office brings new charges against Boris Berezovsky. He is charged with making knowingly false incriminating accusations combined with the fabrication of evidence. This concerns an attempt on him which was allegedly plotted by Russian

secret services. At a news conference in London last July, Berezovsky described it as a crime that had been prevented.

20 March 2008 Dmitry Medvedev says that courts must become more independent.

20 March 2008 Prime Minister Viktor Zubkov warns that the state cannot indefinitely stabilise bread prices.

20 March 2008 Head of the Central Directorate of Military Shipments of the Russian Defence Ministry Major-General Boris Svistkov says Russia is prepared to let its territory be used for transit of cargo to the area of counterterrorist operations in Afghanistan.

21 March 2008 The St Petersburg City Court rules that the leader of the St Petersburg branch of the Yabloko party, Maksim Reznik, be freed.

21 March 2008 First Deputy Prime Minister Sergey Ivanov says many Russian defence companies are not ready for mass production of hi-tech weapons systems.

21 March 2008 An article in *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* by Igor Naumov predicts changes in the government once Vladimir Putin becomes prime minister.

24 March 2008 *Ekho Moskvy* reports on newspaper reports claiming that there is serious dissatisfaction in the military leadership with defence minister Anatoly Serdyukov. CGS Yury Baluyevsky may resign in protest.

Army General Vladimir Isakov says the MOD is reforming its system of procurement and quality control of non-military goods and services on the federal and regional levels.

24 March 2008 Four organizers of the anti-conscription march action are detained in Moscow. The action is due to take place in Moscow on 29 March, and has been coordinated with the city authorities.

25 March 2008 Vladimir Putin says there will be no expansion of prime ministerial powers.

We have no need to change anything in this respect. The powers of the chairman of the government are sufficient to work efficiently within the sphere of responsibility allotted to him by the constitution. Moreover, the chairman of the government can and must rely on the support of the parliamentary majority in the State Duma. It is a very viable construction for the authorities to be efficient.

25 March 2008 Dmitry Medvedev gives an interview to the *Financial Times*.

25 March 2008 A special department for investigating extremist crimes is to be set up in the Investigations Committee under the Prosecutor-General's Office. Chief of the Investigations Committee under the Prosecutor's Office Aleksandr Bastrykin speaks out against the creation of a single investigations committee.

26 March 2008 Vladimir Putin signs a decree removing Aleksandr Chekalin from the position of first deputy interior minister and appointing Lt General Mikhail Sukhodolsky to this position.

26 March 2008 The Federal Immigration Service denies that it is pursuing a campaign against TNK-BP.

The Main Interior Directorate for the Central Federal District says it is not carrying out an investigation in relation to the TNK-BP company.

26 March 2008 The MOD issues a statement rejecting media claims that there are disagreements in the ministry leadership.

26 March 2008 The CPRF expresses concern over the plans to move Navy HQ to St.Petersburg and the MOD's plans to move the Academy of Strategic Missile Troops out of Moscow. The CPRF criticises the defence minister for staging experiments on the army.

An article by Yury Politov in *Izvestiya* analyses possible changes in the MOD.

27 March 2008 Dmitry Medvedev addresses the State Council on the development of small businesses and its importance for the development of the middle classes.

27 March 2008 The Prosecutor-General's Office summons former prime minister and People's Democratic Union leader Mikhail Kasyanov for questioning. He is to be questioned on 31 March as a witness in a criminal case opened in 2005.

27 March 2008 Leonid Pavlov discusses hostility to defence minister Anatoly Serdyukov in the MOD in *Kommentator*.

Commander-in-Chief of the Internal Troops Army General Nikolay Rogozhkin is interviewed in *Krasnaya Zvezda*.

Deputy head of the General Staff Colonel-General Vasily Smirnov says the MOD is not planning to reduce the number of personnel of the Armed Forces or the ministry's central apparatus.

27 March 2008 Russia's chief rabbi Berl Lazar and the chairman of the Council of Muftis of Russia, Ravil Gaynutdin, meet and reiterate their commitment to promoting a constructive dialogue between the country's Jewish and Muslim communities.

27 March 2008 Director of the FSB Nikolay Patrushev says at an international meeting of the heads of special services and law-enforcement agencies, which is taking place in Khanty-Mansiysk that the FSB has managed to reduce the number of terrorist attacks in Russia by more than half each year. He says there were 257 terrorists attacks in 2005, 112 in 2006, 48 in 2007 and none so far in 2008.

28 March 2008 Aleksandr Golts discusses possible splits in the MOD in *Yezhednevny Zhurnal*.

28 March 2008 Representative of the Prosecutor-General's Office Vyacheslav Smirnov says the identity of the man who carried out the murder of Anna Politkovskaya has been established, and all measures are being taken to find and detain him.

Novaya Gazeta editor-in-chief Dmitry Muratov says information that investigators have identified the murderer and have put him on the wanted list is not new, but is needed as a justification for keeping one of the suspects in custody.

30 March 2008 Igor Panarin of the Diplomatic Academy of the Foreign Ministry of the Russian Federation says that Russia should earmark more funds for waging information war.

31 March 2008 Yabloko leader Grigory Yavlinsky says he is set on dialogue with the authorities, and opposes "senseless gatherings, running about on the streets and appeals to foreign countries".

31 March 2008 FSB Director Nikolay Patrushev says international terrorist organizations Hezb-e Tahrir Al-Islam and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan are trying to move their activities to the territory of the Russian Federation.

31 March 2008 The Duma discusses the Russian IT sector. It is developing at a fast rate - around 30 per cent a year - and has good prospect for a potential growth. According to estimates by the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, the volume of the IT-sector might reach 40 billion roubles or 2.3 per cent of Russian GDP by 2010.

31 March 2008 Vladimir Putin signs a decree on the call-up of Russian Federation citizens to military service in April-July 2008 and on the discharge from military service of citizens currently doing military service as conscripts. According to the decree, the call-up campaign will continue from 1 April to 15 July. In total, 133,200 Russian Federation citizens aged between 18 and 27 who are not in reserve and who are subject to call-up to military service are to be called up.

Deputy chief of the General Staff Colonel-General Vasily Smirnov says the MOD is working on plans to reduce officer posts in the Russian army and employ civilians where possible.