

## A Russian Foreign Policy: A Chronology

### July – September 2006

**1 July 2006** The chairman of the Duma Foreign Affairs Committee, Konstantin Kosachev, is interviewed on *Ekho Moskvy*. He says in reference to the killing of Russian diplomats in Iraq that all antiterrorist actions by Russian special forces in third countries will be coordinated with the special forces of the country in question. He says Israel's response to the kidnapping of one of its soldiers is "unacceptable and incommensurate." He defends Russia's contacts with Hamas.

On Iran, he says that it is absolutely not in Russia's interest for Iran to become a nuclear power. "For us, this is just as undesirable, and I would even say it presents as much of a threat to Russia as to any other state. But on the other hand, we are not prepared to wage war for a non-nuclear Iran, or at least to participate in some intervention against that state. Such actions would be just as erroneous as the Iraq operation," he says. "We will not permit, or in any event, we shall try not to permit our partners to commit an evident act of stupidity."

**1 July 2006** The rouble becomes fully convertible.

**2 July 2006** Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Yakovenko says that at the forthcoming G8 summit in St Petersburg, Russia intends to come up with a road map on energy development.

**2 July 2006** Vladimir Putin asks the Duma to ratify a convention designed within the Council of Europe to facilitate the prosecution of corruption.

**3 July 2006** Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni visits Moscow. Sergey Lavrov calls for restraint between Israel and the Palestinians and for the release of an Israeli soldier by the Palestinians.

**3 July 2006** Vladimir Putin has telephone talks with Palestine National Authority President Mahmud Abbas.

**3 July 2006** A news conference in Moscow entitled "Russian Civil Society Under Threat" takes place. The president of the International Federation For Human Rights, Sidiki Kaba, sees the absence of freedom of speech as the main threat to civil society in Russia.

**4 July 2006** Vladimir Putin submits to the Federation Council a draft resolution to grant the Russian president the right to use armed forces units and special-purpose units outside Russia to prevent international terrorist activity. The relevant document states:

"On the basis of Clause D of Part One of Article 102 of the constitution of the Russian Federation and in accordance with the federal law 'On countering terrorism', I am submitting to the Federation Council a proposal to grant the president of the Russian Federation the right to use armed forces formations and special-purpose units as stipulated by Russian law to prevent international terrorist activity for the purpose of protecting human rights and freedoms and safeguarding Russia's

sovereignty, independence and state integrity, outside the territory of Russia."

Chairman of the Duma defence committee Vladimir Vasilyev says the draft law prepared by the Duma introducing changes to the federal law "On countering terrorism" will allow the Russian special services to carry out anti-terrorist missions outside Russia.

**4 July 2006** Sergey Lavrov has a telephone conversation with the UN secretary-general Kofi Annan on the crisis developing in the Palestinian territories.

**4 July 2006** Vladimir Putin announces that Russia is not expecting a reply from Tehran to the proposal of the six intermediaries on the nuclear problem before the G8 summit in St Petersburg but would like to know when this will happen.

Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Kislyak speaks with Israeli officials of the need to settle Iran's nuclear problem with due account of the legitimate concerns of all countries in the region. Kislyak received deputy general-director of the Israeli Foreign Ministry Miryam Zif and Deputy Director General of the Israeli Atomic Energy Commission Ariel Levite, who are in Moscow as members of the delegation led by Israeli Vice-Premier and Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni.

**4 July 2006** Vladimir Putin warns that Russia will refuse to meet the obligations it assumed in its bid to join the World Trade Organization (WTO) if Moscow fails to reach agreement with the USA on the accession terms. He is attending the Civil Eight forum of nongovernmental organizations in Moscow. He says there is no prospect of giving up nuclear power in the absence of viable renewable alternatives.

**4 July 2006** Security Council Deputy Secretary Nikolay Spasskiy is interviewed in *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*. He denies the likelihood of Russia restoring its military presence in Afghanistan and expresses Moscow's interest in developing and broadening future mutually beneficial cooperation with that country in economy and other spheres.

**4 July 2006** The commander of the US 7th Fleet Vice-Admiral Jonathan Greenert visits in Vladivostok.

**4 July 2006** Russian Chief of Staff Yuriy Baluyevskiy says Russia and China will continue the practice of joint military exercises that was born last year in China.

**5 July 2006** Prosecutor-General Yuriy Chayka proposes that the procedures for cooperation within the framework of existing European conventions that deal with criminal law should be revised. He addresses a conference of European prosecutors-general in Moscow.

**5 July 2006** US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has a telephone conversation with Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. They discuss North Korea's missile launch. UN envoy Vitaliy Churkin expresses opposition to imposing sanctions on North Korea over its missile launch.

The Foreign Ministry (MFA) calls on North Korea to show restraint. It states:

"The Russian side expresses major concern over such actions that run contrary to the expectations of the international community, which has an interest in strengthening regional peace and stability

and that may complicate the prospect of a settlement of the nuclear problem on the Korean Peninsula...

"As we have learnt, the launches of a long-range ballistic missile and that of five medium-range missiles were carried out in North Korea on 4 July. This step was taken without prior notification and in violation of the moratorium on missile launches established earlier by Pyongyang...this has also placed under threat the freedom of international shipping in the waters of the Pacific Ocean and has breached the universally accepted world practice relating to warnings of launches."

The Russian side "calls on North Korea to show restraint and to observe the obligations it has assumed in the missile sphere, and it will be forming its stance on the issue within the framework of international law and taking into account the tasks of ensuring regional stability".

Duma International Affairs Committee Chairman Konstantin Kosachev says "if we find out that the area where the missiles fell was the designated target, it would be a scandal. Russia cannot accept this sort of testing in close proximity to its borders from any state, including North Korea."

Chairman of the Federation Council international affairs committee, Mikhail Margelov, calls for dialogue with North Korea and says he opposes sanctions.

**5 July 2006** Andrey Kokoshin, the chairman of the Duma committee for CIS affairs and ties with compatriots says the Georgian authorities are getting ready to resolve the South Ossetian problem by force. He says Russia is capable of protecting its citizens in the region.

**5 July 2006** Presidential aide Igor Shuvalov says Russia will propose a new approach to energy security at the St Petersburg G8 summit.

**5 July 2006** Sergey Lavrov call on Israel to act with restraint and not to put in danger the lives and security of the civilian Palestinian population.

**6 July 2006** Vladimir Putin says the range of North Korean missiles should be put on the agenda for six-nation talks on the North Korean nuclear programme.

Konstantin Kosachev, the head of the Duma Committee on International Affairs, says the situation around North Korea is developing according to a worst-case scenario while Pyongyang's actions may lead to a breakdown in the six-sided talks on its nuclear programme.

Sergey Lavrov warns against taking a hard line towards North Korea. "Attempts to launch straight into talking about some kind of threat from North Korea will only end in North Korea making threats back. This has happened before, everyone did then go back to the negotiating table, but by then the situation had deteriorated markedly. This must be avoided this time".

**6 July 2006** Sergey Lavrov says the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty) can "die a natural death", if the West continues to refuse to ratify it in its adapted version "under far-fetched pretexts of the continuing Russian military presence in the Dniester region and Georgia".

**6 July 2006** Russian Military News Agency AVN reports that Strategic Missile Troops have launched 24 ICBMs during the period between 2001 and 2005.

**6 July 2006** Sergey Lavrov addresses a round table in the Duma on international security.

**6 July 2006** Sergey Ivanov, deputy chairman of the government and defence minister, has says that special subunits of the Defence Ministry have been given the task of finding and destroying the killers of five employees of the Russian embassy in Iraq.

**6 July 2006** Konstantin Kosachev, chairman of the Duma foreign affairs committee, says "the situation with North Korea is developing according to the worst-case scenario...North Korea is acting aggressively, North Korea is acting in a hostile way in relation to the outside world, and its position is undeniably unacceptable."

**7 July 2006** Chief of the armed forces General Staff Yuriy Baluyevskiy says that North Korean missile test launches may in theory represent a danger for Russia if they veer off their trajectory.

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has a discussion on the telephone with US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice about the situation regarding the DPRK's missile launches and Iran's nuclear programme.

The Duma ratifies an intergovernmental agreement between Russia and South Korea on cooperation in the peaceful exploration and use of space. The document was signed in Moscow in September 2004.

**7 July 2006** Head of the Federal Service for Supervision of Compliance with the Law in the sphere of Mass Communications and Preservation of Cultural Heritage Boris Boyarskov says reductions in the broadcasting of Western radio stations in Russia are not politically motivated. He says the move had been prompted by measures to establish order, since radio relay stations often breach the broadcasting rules and licensing agreements.

**7 July 2006** The Federation Council endows the Russian president with special powers to use Russian special services and military groups abroad for the purposes of fighting terrorism. It adopts a resolution permitting the head of state "in accordance with Russian Federation legislation to use formations of the Russian Federation armed forces and special-purpose subunits outside the territory of the Russian Federation in order to suppress international terrorist activity against the Russian Federation, or against citizens of the Russian Federation or persons without citizenship permanently resident on the territory of the Russian Federation".

**7 July 2006** Duma opposition factions tell Chief of General Staff Yuriy Baluyevskiy about their concerns about the state of the army and the country's defence capabilities. Baluyevskiy is present at a Duma session, which discussed the ratification of the protocol on the formation of the armed forces of the member states of the Collective Security Treaty.

**7 July 2006** The director of the Federal Service for Military-Technical Cooperation, Mikhail Dmitriyev, visits Venezuela.

**10 July 2006** Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov visits Mongolia.

**11 July 2006** Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov receives Syrian Deputy Foreign Minister Faysal Miqdad in Moscow.

**11 July 2006** The leader of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, Vladimir Zhirinovskiy (also deputy speaker of the State Duma), visits Iran.

**11 July 2006** The MFA says Russia expects Georgia to show understanding over the temporary closure of the Verkhniy Lars checkpoint and not to obstruct the crossing of the Russian-Georgian border in other areas. The Verkhniy Lars checkpoint has been closed for a technical upgrade since 8 July.

**11 July 2006** Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says Russia is ready to launch a strike on terrorists anywhere in the world if it knows for certain that a terrorist act is being prepared against it.

**11 July 2006** The MFA condemns Estonian Prime Minister Andrus Ansip's pronouncements at a rally of "freedom-fighters" in the town of Viru. The MFA says these freedom fighters are Estonian SS veterans.

**12 July 2006** Sergey Lavrov thinks that "it will be possible to already talk about some kind of results from Russian-American talks on Russia joining the WTO during the G8 summit in St Petersburg".

**12 July 2006** The commander of the Collective Peacekeeping Forces for supporting peace in the Georgian-Ossetian conflict zone, Maj-Gen Marat Kulakhmetov, says that the Collective Peacekeeping Forces contingent has been placed on a heightened alert state in case of a Georgian staged incident during the G8 summit.

The MFA criticises Georgian Parliament Chair Nino Burjanadze's speech at the UN Security Council meeting for attacking the role of the Russian Federation and the CIS peacekeepers in the settlement of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict.

**12 July 2006** The MFA expresses concern over the sharp increase in tension and armed clashes on the border between Israel and Lebanon.

Sergey Lavrov visits Paris. He warns that there is a danger of a full-scale war in Lebanon following the kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers by Hezbollah and the Israeli response.

**12 July 2006** Sergey Lavrov says the position taken by Japan during the UN Security Council's debates on a draft resolution on North Korea's recent missile test launches is totally unacceptable. He says that the draft resolution on tackling the North Korean problem within the UN Security Council "contains unacceptable things".

Sergey Lavrov says that the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) can take any appropriate measures against Iran except the use of force.

"We were disappointed at the absence of a positive reaction from Iran, especially since this runs counter to what President Ahmadinezhad told the president of Russia a month ago while taking part in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) events...today formulae were agreed which rule out absolutely the sanctioning by the UNSC of any use of force against Iran."

Lavrov meets in Paris with other members of the six to discuss Iran. Before leaving for Paris he says the six countries negotiating on Iran's nuclear programme hope to receive an early response from Tehran to their proposals on ways to settle Iran's nuclear problem.

**12 July 2006** Police in Marbella (southern Spain) arrest two Russians on suspicion of murdering the governor of the Russian region of Magadan (Valentin Tsvetkov) in 2002.

**12 July 2006** Igor Sevastyanov, head of the Rosoboroneksport department for defence exports and army armament imports, says the Uralvagonzavod plant in Sverdlovsk Region will deliver 180 T-90 tanks worth about 1bn dollars to Algeria by 2011.

**13 July 2006** Sergey Lavrov says Russia as the G8 chairing country is preparing relevant proposals on the Israel-Lebanon crisis.

Sergey Lavrov says that "all measures are being taken to prevent acts of provocation" on the part of Georgia in South Ossetia.

Sergey Lavrov makes the following comments on the Paris talks decision on Iran.

"We are not talking about any concessions at all. We are talking about achieving the main aim - to make it impossible to violate the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons." "The IAEA has been monitoring everything that has been happening in Iran with regard to its nuclear sphere, including uranium enrichment. All this is under the IAEA's control. The UN Security Council backs it. We are concerned that Iran has not answered many questions raised by the IAEA with regard to its past activity in the nuclear sphere."

**13 July 2006** The MFA makes the following statement on the Israel-Lebanon crisis:

Developments in the Middle East are indeed quite worrying. The attack on the international airport in Beirut is a dangerous step on the road of military escalation. We strongly reaffirm our support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon. We cannot understand or condone the continued destruction by Israel of the civilian infrastructure in Lebanon and in the Palestinian territories and the disproportionate use of force, which affects the civilian population. Equally, all manifestations of terrorism are absolutely unacceptable, as is the practice of taking hostages, who should be freed immediately and unconditionally.

All the sides involved in the current developments should take urgent measures in order to stop the region sliding into open conflict. Even more important is to rule out any steps that would provoke the involvement of more and more participants in the confrontation.

Head of the Federation Council foreign affairs committee Mikhail Margelov says Russia is not holding secret talks with Hamas.

**14 July 2006** Industry and Energy Minister Viktor Khristenko says Russia and Ukraine should "put all their risks, problems and concerns on the table and resolve

them. He says "the problem with gas transit via Ukraine is a three-way issue - between the supplier, the consumer and the transit".

**14 July 2006** US Undersecretary for Economic, Business and Agricultural Affairs Josette Shiner says Washington expects to overcome the remaining differences in its talks on Russia's membership of the World Trade Organization. US Trade Representative Susan Schwab arrived in Moscow on 12 July for talks with German Gref. The talks discuss access to the Russian financial services market and the size of agricultural subsidies.

**14 July 2006** Vladimir Putin says on the Israel-Lebanon crisis:

"We consider that all sides that have now become involved in the conflict must immediately cease military action...It is this that should be done first. This should be the starting point for resolving all other issues and problems. It is a very delicate situation but it is quite obvious that neither hostage-taking to resolve any issues, including those of a political nature, nor an extensive use of force in response to these, albeit illegitimate, actions are acceptable."

The MFA says that as chair of the G8, Russia has decided to include the situation in Lebanon on the summit agenda and to send the foreign minister's special advisor, Sergey Yakovlev, to the Middle East.

"The Russian Foreign Ministry resolutely condemns the kidnapping of military servicemen and the shelling of Israeli territory. At the same time we view the military action unleashed by Israel as a disproportionate and inappropriate use of force that threatens Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and peace and security throughout the region..."

"For its part, the Hezbollah movement should renounce anti-Israeli measures that are also a threat to the interests of its own country, free the Israeli servicemen it holds, stop shelling Israeli territory and respect the UN blue line. We expect the Lebanese government and other parties to give all possible assistance in tackling these issues."

**14 July 2006** The MFA says that: "While reiterating our commitment to a peaceful settlement, we urge the Georgian leadership to show restraint and circumspection. No-one should be under any illusion that there will be no response to any attempts to resolve the problem by force."

**14 July 2006** Presidential aide Igor Shuvalov criticizes Western countries for exerting "pressure" on Russia and preventing it from joining international institutions such as the World Trade Organization and the G7 group of finance ministers. This interview is broadcast on *Ekho Moskvy* on 15 July.

**15 July 2006** Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says Moscow is using its contact with Hamas to defuse the Middle East situation.

We do indeed have contact with the Hamas movement. We are using this contact in order to lower the degree of confrontation; in order to explain our position on the whole of the Middle East settlement, including the inadmissibility of the use of terrorist methods of fighting, including the need to recognize all the neighbouring states - I mean diplomatic

recognition in the literal sense of the word - and to respect one's neighbours' rights.

**15 July 2006** Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says if necessary Russia is willing to discuss the issue of North Korea's nuclear problem at the UN Security Council.

Vladimir Putin and US President George Bush express concern over the Iran and North Korea situations. The presidents also urge North Korea to resume the moratorium on ballistic missile tests.

**15 July 2006** Vladimir Putin and the Canadian prime minister issue a joint statement on energy cooperation.

**15 July 2006** Vladimir Putin and Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi have agreed hold bilateral talks in St.Petersburg. In 2004 trade was up 70 per cent, in 2005 by another 30 per cent. And whereas five years ago there were only 60 enterprises with Japanese capital operating in Russia, there are now around 130.

**15 July 2006** Russia and the USA announce their decision to launch a global initiative to fight acts of nuclear terrorism. This is announced in a joint statement by Vladimir Putin and George W. Bush in St.Petersburg.

**15 July 2006** Sergey Ivanov warns that other states may be dragged into the Middle East conflict.

15 July 2006 Russia's chief negotiator and head of the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade's Department for Trade Negotiations Maksim Medvedkov says the protocol on the conclusion of bilateral talks between Russia and the USA on Russia's membership of the World Trade Organization will not be signed in the next few weeks.

**16 July 2006** The G8 summit in St.Petersburg concludes. Vladimir Putin says:

"First, with regard to energy security: I believe all the journalists who have read the document will have noticed a certain shift of emphasis in the very concept of energy security. Until now, energy security meant stable provision of energy resources to consumers. Now, however, we have convinced our partners of the fact that energy security is a much broader concept, and includes production, transportation and sale on energy markets. All links of that chain - representatives of all these links - bear joint and several responsibility in equal share, and this, I believe, is highly important.

On the Middle East he says:

Not only is Russia able to do so, but in fact Russia has been making the required efforts in contact with both our partners in the Middle East and Israel and the countries neighbouring on Israel. We have been using all the channels to apply efforts aimed at releasing your soldiers. I would like to repeat - all the channels. I have grounds to believe that our actions have not been in vain. But I will refrain from going into detail because of certain circumstances. That is the first thing.

**16 July 2006** Sergey Lavrov says that in the current situation in the Middle East it's important to refrain from blanket accusations against either side.

**16 July 2006** The UN Security Council unanimously adopts a resolution calling on the DPRK to end its missile tests. In addition, Pyongyang must renounce the development of atomic weapons and return to six-party talks.

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov says the UN Security Council resolution on the DPRK is "balanced and demonstrates the unity of the international community to Pyongyang". He says it is necessary to persuade North Korea.

**16 July 2006** Sergey Lavrov says Russian peacekeeping forces will remain in South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

Chairman of the Duma Committee on International Affairs Konstantin Kosachev says the Duma "is not considering appeals by representatives of South Ossetia and Abkhazia to recognize their independence."

**16 July 2006** Finance Minister Aleksey Kudrin says Russia will write off about 10 billion dollars from Iraq's principal debt within days.

**17 July 2006** Vladimir Putin gives a final news conference at the conclusion of the G8 summit in St.Petersburg.

Vladimir Putin meets PRC Chairman Hu Jintao and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

Vladimir Putin and Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev sign a joint declaration on the development of long-term cooperation in the processing and sale of gas from the Karachaganak field.

Vladimir Putin has talks with Brazilian President Luis Lula da Silva.

**17 July 2006** Presidential aide Sergey Prihodko says Russia has no disagreements with its G8 partners as regards the details of the settlement of the Iranian nuclear problem. He also says Russia does not object to the possibility of international peacekeeping forces being sent to Lebanon. Such a decision should go through the UNSC. He says Russia has no intention of initiating the discussion of the situation in Lebanon at the UN Security Council.

**17 July 2006** Federation Council international affairs committee Mikhail Margelov says that the work of the G8 summit has confirmed Russia's international authority and its transformation into a strategic player. "It is obvious that Russia's claims to the status of a great energy power were accepted at the summit. Indeed, the main event of the past five years, which has altered the structure of the world energy market, is Russia's transformation into a strategic player."

**17 July 2006** Federation Council International Affairs Committee Chairman Mikhail Margelov says the G8's "sensible and fair" demands to stop terrorist attacks against Israel, to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1559 on non-interference from outside in the internal affairs of Lebanon and to set free the kidnapped servicemen "cannot be reached by methods proposed by Israel".

**18 July 2006** Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Saltanov has talks in Moscow with Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Mehdi Safari. Saltanov later travels to the Middle East.

**18 July 2006** The evacuation of Russian citizens from Lebanon begins.

**18 July 2006** The MFA criticises a resolution on withdrawing Russian peacekeepers adopted by the Georgian parliament as "a provocative move aimed at increasing the tension, ruining existing formats for talks and removing the treaty and legal bases for a peaceful settlement of the Georgian-Abkhaz and of the Georgian-Ossetian conflicts".

Russia's permanent representative at the OSCE, Aleksey Borodavkin, says at the meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council calls for greater OSCE response to the increasing military strength of Georgia near the zone of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict.

**19 July 2006** Sergey Lavrov says that Russia will protect its citizens in South Ossetia using all means at its disposal.

**19 July 2006** The Federation Council views the Georgian parliament's resolution on the withdrawal of Russian peacekeepers from Abkhazia and South Ossetia as an attempt to deflect the attention of the Georgian people away from internal problems and as a wish to be closer to the USA.

**19 July 2006** Sergey Lavrov speaking on the Israel-Lebanon crisis believes it is essential to announce a cease-fire first and foremost in order to normalize the situation in the Middle East. "First and foremost the sides must announce a cease-fire and must also implement everything that is said in the statement of the G8 - this means both the freeing of hostages and a halt in mutual fire, and the freeing of members of the cabinet and parliament of the Palestinian [National] Authority."

Lavrov also calls for "a search not for those to blame in the Lebanese-Israeli conflict, but for ways to get out of the crisis...You can't achieve a result by condemning this or that side...If you start thinking about categories of 'who is to blame', as some states are trying to do, accusing specific countries, specific leaders, then this will only whip up passions even more."

Lavrov says that Israel is hindering the evacuation of Russian citizens from Lebanon.

Sergey Ivanov says that carrying out a peacekeeping operation in the zone of the armed conflict in the Middle East under the aegis of the UN is only possible with the agreement of the conflicting sides.

**19 July 2006** Deputy foreign ministers of Russia and Iran Aleksandr Alekseyev and Mehdi Safari have talks in Moscow. They agree to step up cooperation in the sphere of countering international terrorism and narcotics trade.

**20 July 2006** Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Saltanov visits Syria.

**20 July 2006** The Emergencies Ministry says the evacuation of Russian and CIS citizens from Lebanon is complete.

**21 July 2006** CIS leaders arrive in Moscow for an informal summit. Four presidents are not in Moscow: Georgia, Armenia, Ukraine and Turkmenistan. The Russian, Azeri, Belarus, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Moldovan, Tajik and Uzbek leaders attend.

Moscow expresses regret over Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili's decision to cancel his visit to the unofficial CIS summit in Moscow.

Konstantin Kosachev, chairman of the Duma international affairs committee expresses concern that reshuffles in the Georgian government are not evidence that Georgia has changed its course towards confrontation with Moscow

**21 July 2006** Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Saltanov cancels his visit to Lebanon.

**21 July 2006** MFA spokesman Mikhail Kamynin confirms the position of the sextet (Russia, the USA, China, France, Britain and Germany) on Iran's nuclear problem, set out during the 12 July meeting of their foreign ministers. "The Iranian Majlis National Security Council statement circulated by the Iranian embassy [on 20 July] contained no new ideas or proposals that indicate the readiness of the Iranian side to work constructively on the issue of the Iranian nuclear dossier."

**21 July 2006** The president of Russian Railways, Vladimir Yakunin, arrives in Pyongyang for a working visit to discuss the issues of railway cooperation between the Russian Federation and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

**21 July 2006** Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Kislyak calls for talks with the USA on a new bilateral treaty covering reductions in strategic offensive weapons after the current START treaty expires in 2009.

**22 July 2006** The MFA proposes a meeting on the Middle East settlement involving representatives of Russia, the USA, Great Britain, France, Italy, Lebanon, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Nations, the European Union and the World Bank to meet in Beirut.

**24 July 2006** The MFA says Russia believes the main objective of efforts to reach a Middle East settlement is a cease-fire between Israel and Lebanon and the establishment of a dialogue, including with Hezbollah.

Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Saltanov visits Israel.

**25 July 2006** Slovak foreign minister Jan Kubis visits Moscow.

**25 July 2006** The MFA condemns the Georgian decision to send troops into Kodori gorge.

The chairman of the Duma committee on international affairs, Konstantin Kosachev, fears that war could well break out in Georgia as a result of the latest tension in the Kodori gorge. He also expresses concern that the conflict in the Middle East could spread. He states that if Israel did not call a halt to its present "mistaken" action in Lebanon, a substantially more serious conflict could result, with Syria, Iran and other countries being drawn in.

**25 July 2006** Vladimir Putin has talks with the Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister and head of the Saudi National Security Council, Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal Bin-Abd-al-Aziz and Bandar Bin-Sultan Bin-Abd-al-Aziz.

Vladimir Putin says that the UN should be playing a more effective role in resolving the Lebanon crisis.

**25 July 2006** Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Saltanov, visiting Israel, has talks with with Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni and Vice-Prime Minister Shimon Peres.

**25 July 2006** Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez begins his visit to Russia.

**26 July 2006** Vladimir Putin signs the federal law "On the ratification of the Criminal Law Convention on Corruption" passed by the State Duma on 8 July 2006 and approved by the Federation Council on 14 July. Russia signs the convention in Strasbourg on 27 January 1999.

**26 July 2006** Georgian Rustavi TV says that Georgian forces have detained a Russian Ural truck carrying weapons in Kodori gorge.

The secretary-general of the CIS Collective Security Treaty Organization, Nikolay Bordyuzha, says Georgia's attempts to use force to resolve the problem of the Kodori Gorge are not to the advantage of ensuring mutual security in the CIS.

Sergey Lavrov makes the following statement about the situation:

"Yesterday we made a statement that expresses our concern about the fact that an operation of Georgian power-wielding structures is under way in the Kodori Gorge and that convoys have been moved there to counter a grouping of Svans who called for the replacement of certain individuals in Georgia's power-wielding structures...This convoy was moved there in violation of the existing rules and regulations in the conflict zone, and in violation of procedures set up jointly by all sides and controlled by collective peacekeeping forces."

Defence minister Sergey Ivanov says that by entering Kodori Gorge, Tbilisi violated the 1994 Moscow agreement, in which it had undertaken not to send armed detachments to the area.

**26 July 2006** The Transdnestr first deputy industry minister, Yuriy Ganin, says the total amount of aid provided to Transdnestr by 17 Russian regions stands at almost 30 million Russian roubles (US\$1 million).

**26 July 2006** Sergey Lavrov expresses satisfaction with the outcome of the Rome conference on the Middle East.

"The main thing that we have managed to achieve as a result of quite complicated discussions was to unanimously speak for the most urgent cessation of combat operations, for a ceasefire and for an end to the violence. This is necessary in order for people to stop being killed on both sides of the border, both in Lebanon and Israel. And with a ceasefire, with the solution of urgent humanitarian problems, it will be possible to give a positive response to the request which the prime minister of Lebanon made today, that stabilization forces be deployed under the UN Security Council mandate."

Mikhail Margelov, chairman of the Federation Council international affairs committee, says that peacekeeping forces can only be sent to the Lebanese-Israeli conflict zone and start performing their mission there after both sides declare a ceasefire.

**26 July 2006** The former head of the Atomic Energy Ministry, Yevgeniy Adamov, says Iran can create a nuclear bomb within three to five years.

**26 July 2006** Defence minister Sergey Ivanov says that any revision of the contracts for the sale of Russian aircraft and helicopters to Venezuela is out of the question.

**27 July 2006** The European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg rules that Russia was guilty of violating the right to life of a Chechen man (Khadzimurat Yandiyev), who disappeared without trace in February 2000.

**27 July 2006** Representatives of a number of Russian human rights organizations called on the US authorities to ban the President of Bashkortostan, Murtaza Rakhimov, and the republic's interior minister, Rafail Divayev, from entering the USA.

**27 July 2006** Lt-Gen Valeriy Yevnevich, deputy commander-in-chief of Russian Ground Forces, says Russian peacekeepers in the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict zone will open fire if they are subjected to an attack.

**27 July 2006** Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez meets Vladimir Putin in Moscow. The talks in the Kremlin are attended not only by officials but also the most prominent businessmen, the heads of Interros, Russian Aluminium and a pipe metallurgical company: Venezuela will need Russian pipes in their project to build a major gas pipeline, which will run from Venezuela to southern Latin America, to Rio de la Plata, about 8,000 km.

**27 July 2006** The MFA says it is shocked by the deaths of UN military observers in Lebanon and believes that attacks on peacekeepers cannot be justified.

**27 July 2006** Maj-Gen Yuriy Sapunov, head of the FSB directorate for combating international terrorism, interviewed in *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, says Russia does not rule out that Chechen rebels were involved in the murder of Russian diplomats in Iraq.

**27 July 2006** Moldovan Prime Minister Vasile Tarlev says he hopes that Moldovan wine will return to the Russian market.

**28 July 2006** Sergey Lavrov says that Russia is counting on the Iranian leadership completing its consideration of the proposals from the Six as soon as possible and giving a positive response.

**28 July 2006** Sergey Lavrov says that all accords on settling the Israeli-Lebanese conflict should be agreed with all the main forces in Lebanon, including Hezbollah.

"We, like the Europeans, believe that as soon as there is a ceasefire comprehensive accords need to be worked out to tackle a number of problems. First, security in both Israel and Lebanon; and second, the removal of all ambiguities over the border between Israel and Lebanon.

"We proceed from the view that if both Syria and Lebanon, as they say, regard this area as Lebanese, then an accord on this matter needs to be concluded in the appropriate way. Then there would be no reason for Israel to maintain a presence on Lebanese territory, since in 2000 it withdrew its troops from all the remaining territory of Lebanon and declared that it did not intend to stay on Lebanese territory; and

Hezbollah would have no reason to demand that hostilities against Israel should continue because this problem has not been resolved.

"I don't think there will be many who wish to send contingents to this region. Not only is it necessary to stop the violence, but it is also necessary to come to agreement on steps which would make it possible to eliminate the long-term reasons for the recurrence of such violence.

"So we advocate that the (Security) Council should draw up the appropriate decision. We are together with the European Union on this. Many EU countries, and France in particular, intend to cooperate in drawing up a resolution like this. But of course, for such a decision to be taken you need all other members to agree, or as a minimum not to object."

**28 July 2006** Sergey Lavrov says that Georgia is trying to settle conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia by force. The MFA is concerned about Georgian deployments in Kodori gorge.

First Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Denisov and President of South Ossetia Eduard Kokoyty hold talks in Moscow.

**28 July 2006** Sergey Lavrov says that bilateral problems between North Korea and the USA and Japan should not be linked up with the six-party talks on the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula.

**31 July 2006** The MFA says that the tragedy in Qana "again proves with full obviousness that it is necessary immediately to stop military operations, bloodshed and violence in Lebanon".

**31 July 2006** Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says he considers it necessary to carry out international inspections of Georgian armed formations stationed in the upper part of the Kodori Gorge. The MFA "calls for the withdrawal of Georgian subunits from the Kodori Gorge and for a continuation of the talks process within the framework of existing formats".

South Ossetian President Eduard Kokoyty says in Moscow that the republic wants to be part of Russia and will submit an application to the Constitutional Court of Russia soon.

**31 July 2006** Maksim Medvedkov, head of the Russian delegation at the World Trade Organisation accession talks, says Russia hopes to join the WTO in 2007.

### August

**1 August 2006** Sergey Lavrov, who is head of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, describes the shelling of Qana which killed 60 people as an unacceptable violation of human rights.

**1 August 2006** The MFA calls on Iran to listen to the opinion of the world community. This is stated at the MFA in connection with the adoption at the UN Security Council of a resolution on the Iranian nuclear programme. Deputy foreign minister Sergey Kislyak says if Iran does not comply with the UN Security Council's demand to stop uranium enrichment before 31 August, this does not mean that sanctions against it will be imposed automatically.

**1 August 2006** The MFA condemns the deployment of Georgian armed forces in the Kodori Gorge.

Commander of the CIS peacekeeping forces in the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict zone Maj-Gen Sergey Chaban and a group of officers from the Joint Command headquarters visit the 106th and 107th observation posts in the lower section of Kodori Gorge.

**2 August 2006** The ministry of internal affairs of Abkhazia has detained one of the people who attacked Russian peacekeepers between Gagra and Gudauta. Two Russian peacekeepers were killed.

**2 August 2006** The MFA says Russia intends decisively to seek an immediate cessation of bloodshed in the Middle East and a transition to a political settlement of the crisis. Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Saltanov meets with a group of ambassadors from Arab countries and the chargé d'affaires of the Arab League mission in Moscow.

**3 August 2006** Atomstroyeksport states that "the first unit of the Bushehr (Iran) nuclear power station is 95 per cent complete". Sergey Shmatko, the president of Atomstroyeksport, says: "We are speeding up the work on the unit as much as possible in order to complete all main work for physical launch in 2007."

**3 August 2006** The MFA calls for an immediate ceasefire in Lebanon. Deputy foreign minister Andrey Denisov states:

"As we can see in the example of Lebanon the incommensurate use of force does not lead to the solution of the tasks, which those who have started - who have unleashed military action have set. Bombings have lasted for three weeks, people continue dying. How long can this continue? Diplomatic manoeuvring around the question of the cessation of fire, cessation of military action is becoming not just inappropriate, but also unbearable. Therefore our demand is an immediate ceasefire."

The MFA states:

"The continuing bloody conflict in the Middle East raises the most serious concern in Russia. From the very beginning of this most dangerous crisis, our country has firmly stood for the cessation of violence and a political settlement...the need to ensure the security of Israel, as well as that of all the other countries in the region, and the need not to allow shelling of Israeli territory or terrorist attacks that lead to civilian casualties do not cause any doubt. At the same time a question arises: is the response to the abduction of two Israeli soldiers commensurate and when will this bloody nightmare end?"

Sa'd al-Hariri, Lebanese parliamentary majority leader and son of former Lebanese prime minister Rafiq al-Hariri, arrives in Moscow for talks on the situation in the Middle East. He says the aim of his visit is to seek Moscow's help in persuading Israel to declare a ceasefire and he speaks in favour of introducing an international peacekeeping force in southern Lebanon.

**3 August 2006** The MFA states that as a UN member, Iran should comply with and implement UN decisions. The MFA is commenting on the Iranian side's statement that "the UN Security Council's resolution on Iran has no legal grounds". According

to the ministry, "the Russian position in connection with UN Security Council Resolution 1696 on the Iranian nuclear problem was expressed on 1 August, as well as in the statement of the Russian permanent representative at the UN on the motives for voting in connection with the above resolution".

**4 August 2006** The MFA criticises sanctions imposed by the US Department of State on the companies Rosoboroneksport and Sukhoi for commercial ties with Iran. The companies are accused of breaking the US domestic law, passed in 2000, 'On nonproliferation with regards to Iran', which bans cooperation with that country in proliferation of weapons of mass destruction,"

**4 August 2006** The leader of the Lebanese parliamentary majority, Sa'd Hariri, arrives in Moscow. He has talks with Secretary of the Security Council Igor Ivanov.

**5 August 2006** The MOD criticises the US decision to impose sanctions on Rosoboroneksport and Sukhoi for alleged dealings with Iran. "Most probably, the sanctions were imposed by the USA in response to Russia's breakthrough on the Venezuelan armaments market."

**6 August 2006** Vladimir Putin and British Prime Minister Tony Blair discuss the Middle East situation by telephone.

**7 August 2006** Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says he does not see any possibility for Russian peacekeepers to take part in the settlement of the Israeli-Lebanese conflict in the near future.

**7 August 2006** Vladimir Putin congratulates Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko over the phone on successfully settling the political crisis in Ukraine. Putin also congratulates Viktor Yanukovich on his appointment as Ukraine's prime minister.

**7 August 2006** Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov condemns the US State Department's sanctions against Rosoboroneksport and Sukhoi.

**8 August 2006** Russia Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Denisov has a telephone conversation with Syrian Foreign Minister Walid al-Mu'allim.

Denisov welcomes the US-French draft UN Security Council resolution on the Israel-Lebanon crisis. Denisov welcomes the Lebanese government's offer to station 15,000 troops in southern Lebanon.

**8 August 2006** Moldovan President Vladimir Voronin visits Moscow for talks with Vladimir Putin.

**8 August 2006** Deputy Foreign Minister Grigoriy Karasin has talks with the Abkhaz leadership in Sukhumi. The purpose of the consultations is to renew a full-fledged Georgian-Abkhaz negotiating process.

**8 August 2006** The prime minister of separatist South Ossetia, Yuriy Morozov, visits North Ossetia. Yuriy Morozov is meeting his North Ossetian counterpart, Aleksandr Merkulov, in Vladikavkaz to discuss new economic projects. At a joint meeting of the two Ossetian governments in Tskhinvali on 19 May an agreement was signed on socio-economic, technical and cultural cooperation.

Head of the MOD press service Vyacheslav Sedov describes as groundless claims by Georgian Defence Minister Irakli Okruashvili that Georgian positions in the Kodori Gorge have come under fire from where Russian peacekeepers' posts are located.

**9 August 2006** Ukrainian Fuel and Energy Minister Yuriy Boyko visits Moscow, where he meets Gazprom board chairman Aleksey Miller.

**9 August 2006** The MFA says the statement by Tbilisi about the non-participation of representatives of the Collective Peacekeeping Forces of the CIS in monitoring the situation in the Kodori Gorge contradicts existing agreements.

**9 August 2006** First Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Denisov and leader of the parliamentary majority in Lebanon Sa'd al-Hariri speak by telephone. Russia and Lebanon back the earliest adoption of a UN Security Council resolution to end the bloodshed in the Lebanese-Israeli conflict zone.

**10 August 2006** The MFA denies reports that modern Russian-made antitank weapons have been supplied to Lebanon.

A deputy head of the ministry's information department, Viktor Beltsov, says the departure of Emergencies Ministry Il-76 aircraft carrying humanitarian aid for residents of Lebanon at the request of the UN World Food Programme has been postponed until a later date.

**10 August 2006** The president of the self-proclaimed republic of Abkhazia, Sergey Bagapsh, and deputy chairman of the parliament of the republic of North Ossetia - Alania Azamat Khadikov discuss interparliamentary and humanitarian cooperation in Sukhumi.

**11 August 2006** Vladimir Putin and Iranian President Mahmud Ahmadinezhad speak by telephone.

**11 August 2006** Russia proposes its own variant to settle the Middle East crisis. A new draft resolution submitted to the UN Security Council envisages an immediate cease-fire for 72 hours. Vitaliy Churkin, Russia's permanent representative to the UN states:

“I think that a humanitarian truce and latest intensive and extraordinary diplomatic efforts are in Israel's interests too, because the situation there, as I said, is on the verge of a new escalation of the military confrontation and military actions. We think that many in Israel understand that it can produce grave consequences for Israel, Lebanon and the whole region. Hence this cease-fire, if it is approved by the UN Security Council, would give all of us the last chance to avoid tragic developments.”

**11 August 2006** Deputy Foreign Minister Grigoriy Karasin says the Russian peacekeepers in the Georgia-Abkhaz conflict zone are being unjustly accused by the Georgian side.

**12 August 2006** Vladimir Putin has a telephone conversation with Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert.

**14 August 2006** The MFA says that Moscow "expects all sides to adhere strictly to UN Security Council Resolution 1701". A TASS report at 1423 gmt, quoting the Foreign Ministry's information and press department, said the ministry was

considering Russia's possible participation in the international peacekeeping force in Lebanon.

The chairman of the Duma international affairs committee, Konstantin Kosachev says that in the circumstances Russia's participation in the international peacekeeping forces that are to be deployed on the Israeli-Lebanese border is both undesirable and dangerous.

**14 August 2006** Russia and Germany sign an agreement on the early repayment of the debt of Russia and the former Soviet Union. The agreement provides for the early repayment of the previously restructured debt of 8.14 billion euros to Germany.

**15 August 2006** Ground Troops Deputy Commander for Peacekeeping Forces Lt-Gen Valeriy Yevnevich says the armed forces have not been set the task of preparing peacekeeping units to be sent to Lebanon.

**15 August 2006** A summit of the Eurasian Economic Community opens in Sochi.

**15 August 2006** Russia and Singapore sign an agreement on free economic zones.

**16 August 2006** Russia and Ukraine discuss gas issues at the summit in Sochi.

Ukrainian Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovych and Vladimir Putin discuss the outcome of the Ukrainian-Russian intergovernmental talks in Simferopol.

**16 August 2006** The MFA regards as ungrounded the Japanese protest over the detention of a Japanese fishing boat by Russian coastguards. One Japanese crew member was killed when border guards opened fire.

**16 August 2006** The Union of Cossack Hosts of Russia and Abroad and the Cossack community of the republic of Abkhazia sign an agreement on friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance in Sukhumi.

**16 August 2006** The BlackSeaFor Naval Group launches an exercise under Russian command.

**16 August 2006** The executive director of the Belarusian-Russian space programme, Arkadz Krawtsow, says Belarus and Russia are drafting a new research and technical programme of the Union State called "Development of the Cosmos-NT Multifunctional Space System". The programme covers the period from 2008 to 2011.

**17 August 2006** The Georgian-South Ossetian Joint Control Commission meets in Moscow.

The Russian MOD completes the withdrawal of military hardware from the base in Akhalkalaki, southern Georgia, to Armenia.

**17 August 2006** The heads of special services of Russia and Kazakhstan meet in Volgograd to discuss international terrorism.

**18 August 2006** Gazprom rejects Swedish complaints that the construction of the North European Gas Pipeline will damage the Baltic Sea ecosystem.

**18 August 2006** Vladimir Putin has a telephone conversation with Lebanese Prime Minister Fu'ad Abd-al-Basit al-Sanyurah. He says he is satisfied with the progress in the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701.

The MFA says the Russian side "is continuing a careful study of the question of the involvement of Russian servicemen as peacekeepers in Lebanon... When the results of these studies have been analysed, a decision will be taken on whether Russia should contribute to the UN forces."

**18 August 2006** The former chief of staff of Strategic Missile Troops, Col-Gen Viktor Yesin, says North Korea has the potential necessary for carrying out an experimental nuclear explosion.

**18 August 2006** The MFA says it hopes that "the Japanese side will take effective steps to curtail poaching in waters under Russian jurisdiction".

**21 August 2006** Viktor Opekunov, head of the subcommittee for nuclear energy and Duma deputy says that Russia should not revise its attitude to Iran despite the fact that Tehran has declared its intention to continue working on its nuclear programme.

**21 August 2006** Secretary-General of the Eurasian Economic Community Grigoriy Rapota says the creation of a customs union will be complete by the start of 2008.

**21 August 2006** CSTO Secretary-General Nikolay Bordyuzha says the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) is maintaining contacts with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and intends to develop them in every way.

**21 August 2006** Indian Chief of Army Staff Gen J J Singh visits Russia.

**22 August 2006** Vladimir Putin has telephone talks with Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi.

**22 August 2006** The Russian ambassador to the UN, Vitaliy Churkin, calls for the resumption of the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue.

**22 August 2006** Federation Council International Affairs Committee Chairman Mikhail Margelov says that if Iran rejects proposals by "the six" on settlement of the nuclear problem, the international community should not rush ahead with sanctions.

**22 August 2006** Air force deputy commander-in-chief Lt-Gen Aytech Bizhev says the military of Russia and Belarus have prepared documents for setting up a unified regional air defence system.

**23 August 2006** Vladimir Putin and German Chancellor Angela Merkel discuss by telephone the Iran nuclear problem and Lebanon.

The MFA says that Russia will continue to seek a negotiated political settlement of the crisis surrounding Iran's nuclear programme. The MFA is commenting on Iran's response on 22 August to the proposal made by the group of six countries (USA, China, Russia, the UK, France and Germany).

**23 August 2006** The CSTO holds exercises Rubezh-2006 in Kazakhstan. They end on 25 August.

**24 August 2006** Chairman of Federation Council Sergey Mironov is interviewed in Tajik journal *Biznes I Politika* on the security of Tajikistan's southern borders.

**24 August 2006** Norwegian Minister of Petroleum and Energy Odd Roger Enoksen said that in the future Russian gas might get to Europe via Norwegian pipelines.

**24 August 2006** Sergey Lavrov and US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice hold a telephone conversation discussing Iran.

Mikhail Margelov, chairman of the Federation Council international affairs committee is interviewed on TV on the Iranian nuclear crisis.

**24 August 2006** Defence Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Sergey Ivanov leaves for a working visit to the Far East and Alaska, where he is to meet US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld.

**24 August 2006** Vladimir Putin discusses the situation in Lebanon and issues of bilateral relations with Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan by telephone.

**25 August 2006** Defence minister and deputy prime minister, Sergey Ivanov, says Russia's view is that it is "premature and inadvisable" to talk about sanctions against Iran at the moment. He says Russia has not yet decided whether to send peacekeepers to Lebanon since it has not been decided yet what their status, rights and mandate are.

**25 August 2006** The Economic Development and Trade Ministry reports that trade between Russia and Iran in the first quarter of 2006 was half the level of the same period in 2005. The two countries' trade expanded steadily until 2005, from 661 million dollars in 2000 to 2,026 million dollars (including Russian exports worth 1,901 million dollars and imports from Iran worth 124.9m). In 2004 trade grew 45 per cent but only by 5 per cent in 2005, and in the first quarter of 2006 it has halved: it fell year-on-year from 437.4m to 224.2 million dollars.

**28 August 2006** Vladimir Putin meets Montenegrin Prime Minister Milo Djukanovic in Sochi.

**28 August 2006** Chairman of the Duma international affairs committee Konstantin Kosachev says Iran's stubborn refusal to abandon uranium enrichment on its own territory is simply increasing the international community's mistrust of the country's development of a peaceful nuclear programme.

**28 August 2006** Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov has talks in Alaska with US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld in Alaska. He says Russia will not join the US initiative regarding US plans to use intercontinental ballistic missiles with conventional warheads for combating terrorism.

**28 August 2006** The Finance Ministry website notes that the debt owed by foreign states on loans extended by the government of the former USSR and the government of the Russian Federation exceeded R1,985bn as of 1 January 2006. This is 68,968,165,000 dollars. Listed among the debtors are the governments of China (1.4bn dollars), Korea [as received] (4.4bn dollars), Iraq (9.4bn dollars), Syria (nearly 1.4bn dollars), as well as Albania, Algeria, Vietnam and India. It is also said that the debt of member states of the CIS on loans extended by the government of the Russian Federation amounted to 3.294bn dollars as of 1 January 2006. Of these, Ukraine owes 1.4bn dollars, Uzbekistan 670.886 million dollars, Belarus

360.827 million dollars, Tajikistan 295.468 million dollars, Kyrgyzstan 186.015 million dollars, Moldova 144.733 million dollars and Georgia 150.463 million dollars.

**29 August 2006** First Deputy Prime Minister Dmitriy Medvedev visits China.

**29 August 2006** Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Titov says the prospects for Russia signing bilateral border agreements with Latvia and Estonia depend on the ability of the two Baltic states to give up their revanchist claims.

Titov has described as provocative the remarks made by several officials in Lithuania about possible restrictions on railway cargo transit to Kaliningrad Region in response to the suspension of Russian oil supplies to Lithuania through the Druzhba pipeline, caused by its breakdown, and its planned repairs.

**29 August 2006** A commission to set up an international uranium enrichment centre in Angarsk starts working in Rosatom.

**30 August 2006** A meeting of the Russia-Islamic World strategic vision group takes place in Kazan. Foreign Ministry special envoy Veniamin Popov says Russia "must play a bigger role in not allowing a split between civilizations."

**30 August 2006** Two Japanese fishermen from the poachers' boat *Kisshin Maru 31* are handed over to the Japanese side.

**30 August 2006** Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Titov says Russia regards Central and Eastern Europe as "a region which has traditionally been a priority as far as Russian interests are concerned". "We endeavour to build relations with them on the basis of mutual respect, equal rights, taking each others' interests into account and healthy pragmatism. Central and Eastern European states are our historic neighbours, with whom Russia has been maintaining economic, cultural and spiritual ties going back many centuries."

A group of warships of the Baltic Fleet is heading for the venue of the international naval exercise *Open Spirit 2006*.

**30 August 2006** Sergey Lavrov meets Japan's senior vice minister of foreign affairs, Katsutoshi Kaneda, and demands that Tokyo honour its undertakings to put a stop to poaching in Russian waters.

## September

**1 September 2006** The MFA says that Moscow regrets that Iran has not satisfied the demand of the UN Security Council resolution No 1696 and did not suspend uranium enrichment. Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov warns against sanctions. Sergey Lavrov states that: "decisions must be directed toward observance of the non-proliferation regime and of the rights of states to peaceful use of nuclear energy while observing international obligations...Which methods should be used to achieve these aims is a question currently under discussion." Lavrov also states:

What is at stake is not the fate of Iran. The fate of Iran is in the hands of the people of Iran. What is at stake is that we want to ensure the inviolability of the nonproliferation regime while at the same time respecting and guaranteeing the rights of each country that is a

conscientious member of the Non-Proliferation Treaty to the civilian development of nuclear energy.

What means can be used to achieve these goals is an issue that is currently under discussion. We accept a diverse spectrum of means, but only means that would advance us towards the above goal, not close off the road towards it.

Sergey Lavrov gives a speech on Russian foreign policy to MGIMO.

**1 September 2006** A Moroccan delegation led by Moroccan National Electrification Office director-general Younes Maamar visits Russia to discuss developing cooperation with Russia in the nuclear energy sector, including construction of nuclear power plants.

**1 September 2006** A delegation of the Japanese Foreign Ministry headed by senior vice foreign minister Katsutoshi Kaneda visits the Maritime Territory to become acquainted with the programme of scrapping nuclear submarines decommissioned from the Pacific Fleet.

**2 September 2006** Sergey Lavrov visits Angola. He says Russian companies have an interest in the development of oil and gas as well as iron ore deposits in Angola.

**3 September 2006** Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says Russia is only willing to send engineer troops to Lebanon within the framework of UN peacekeeping forces.

**3 September 2006** Sergey Lavrov cancels his visit to Nigeria because the Nigerian side has not confirmed the programme of the visit.

Lavrov visits Ethiopia. He says Russia will provide support to the UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) so that it can promote stability in the region.

**4 September 2006** Vladimir Putin visits Greece. He says the Burgas-Alexandroupolis oil pipeline project is of great importance for Europe's economic development, at a trilateral meeting in Athens with the Bulgarian president (Georgi Parvanov) and Greek prime minister (Konstantinos Karamanlis). They sign a declaration on energy cooperation.

**4 September 2006** The MFA says Tbilisi is openly preparing the ground for a non-peaceful settlement of the conflict in South Ossetia.

**4 September 2006** The chairman of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation, Vyacheslav Lebedev visits Iran.

**4 September 2006** The Admiral Chabanenko large antisubmarine warfare craft and the USS Barry have arrived in Trondheim, Norway, where a conference on the participation in the Russian-US bilateral naval exercise Northern Eagle-2006 is scheduled to take place.

**5 September 2006** Vladimir Putin visits South Africa. Four intergovernmental agreements are signed. The first agreement is the Treaty of Friendship and Partnership between the South African Republic and the Russian Federation.

**5 September 2006** Igor Shuvalov, an aide to the Russian president says it is possible that Russia may join sanctions against Iran. He says also:

"At the same time, we so far proceed from the fact that it is necessary to deal with Iran with utmost care...economic sanctions against Iran or military operations against that country, one should realize that these actions will lead to the people of Iran rallying around the government and will set the Iranians in favour of the uranium enrichment programme".

**5 September 2006** The MFA says it is considering financial aid for Lebanon.

**5 September 2006** Russian presidential aide Igor Shuvalov says that Russia is not aiming to join the WTO by hook or by crook.

**6 September 2006** It is reported that Georgia's Foreign Ministry is to demand an explanation from Russia about the funding of political parties in Georgia.

**6 September 2006** The speaker of the lower house of parliament, Boris Gryzlov, says that the issue of holding the Torgau-2006 Russian-US military exercise in Nizhniy Novgorod Region will not be raised until the Duma ratifies the agreement "On the status of foreign armed forces". The Torgau-2006 Russian-US exercise was scheduled to take place from 21 September to 8 October.

**6 September 2006** Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov is interviewed in *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*. He says that the presence of UN peacekeepers on the border between Syria and Lebanon "is not necessary at this point".

**6 September 2006** The MFA says that Moscow is hoping that Estonia "will take a more realistic position and resume considering Russia's proposal regarding international and legal registration of the Russian-Estonian border". Moscow passed a note to the Estonian side at the end of July with the proposal to hold talks on signing anew the documents on the border, stipulating that all previous documents on the territorial issue are no longer valid, to avoid any speculation. Therefore as far as Russia is concerned, the May 2005 border treaty is no longer valid.

**7 September 2006** Vladimir Putin visits Morocco.

**7 September 2006** The Valdai international club holds a round table on world energy security issues and Russia's role in this area.

**7 September 2006** Sergey Lavrov visits Lebanon and Syria. He pledges Russian engineering troops for Lebanon. Lavrov says that Russia is ready to help investigate possible supply of weapons by Syria to Hezbollah.

**7 September 2006** Russian ambassador-at-large Yuriy Popov denies Georgian accusations of Russian involvement in a coup plot. Duma speaker Boris Gryzlov says that the Georgian leadership is authoritarian.

The MFA says the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict settlement process is effectively deadlocked thanks to Georgian actions.

Lt-Gen Valeriy Yevnevich, deputy commander-in-chief of the Russian Federation Land Troops, says Georgia is preparing to resolve the South Ossetian issue by force.

**7 September 2006** Deputy Foreign Minister Grigoriy Karasin says "Russia expects that the Beijing talks process on the settlement of the nuclear problem of the

Korean peninsula will be continued in the near future...Russia consistently calls for a political settlement of the nuclear problem of the Korean peninsula within the framework of six-sided talks...Despite the existing difficulties, in the current situation there continue to be real opportunities and an objective necessity for continuing the search for ways to resolve the problems of the peninsula."

**8 September 2006** Gazprom reaches an agreement with Ukraine on the supply of gas.

**8 September 2006** Sergey Lavrov gives an interview whilst in the Middle East. He gives his backing to to Palestinian National Authority Chairman Mahmud Abbas' attempt to achieve a durable political settlement with Israel. He denies the possibility that Russia could pull out of the Bushehr nuclear power plant project in Iran.

**8 September 2006** Sergey Lavrov visits Israel and Palestine.

**8 September 2006** RosAtom head Sergey Kiriyenko says that the Bushehr reactor in Iran could start working in September 2007.

**8 September 2006** Foreign Ministry special envoy for relations with CIS countries Valeriy Kenyaykin says the MFA is proposing a three-stage process for breaking the deadlock in the talks between Moldova and the Transdnestr region.

**8 September 2006** The deputy head of the Federal Industry Agency Viktor Kholstov says Russia is planning to increase its share of funding a programme for the destruction of weapons of mass destruction on the territory of the former USSR. The G8 countries agreed at a summit meeting in Kananaskis (Canada) in 2002 to allocate 20 billion dollars for the implementation of the programme. Russia currently spends 2 billion dollars on this programme.

**8 September 2006** The 7th session of the space cooperation subcommission of the Russian-Chinese commission for preparing regular meetings between the two countries' heads of state agree on a joint space programme for 2007-09.

**9 September 2006** Anatoliy Safonov, Russian president's special envoy for international cooperation in the fight against terrorism and transnational crime, says he regrets the refusal of Great Britain and the USA to extradite Chechen rebel emissaries to Russia. He refers to failed attempts to extradite Akhmed Zakayev. Safonov says Russia is discussing with its partners from Scandinavian countries the issue of shutting down internet sites belonging to Chechen fighters.

**9 September 2006** Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Yakovenko says Moscow welcomes the adoption of a global antiterrorism strategy by the UN General Assembly. The document was adopted on 8 September.

**9 September 2006** The MFA expresses serious concern at the increase in tension in the zone of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict and urges maximum restraint by the sides.

**10 September 2006** Vladimir Putin visits Kaliningrad oblast. He visit the Baltic Fleet's naval base at Baltiysk. Putin mentions the importance of transport links with Lithuania.

**11 September 2006** Sergey Lavrov is interviewed in *Vremya Novostey*. He says that one cannot call Iran's response to the proposals of the six mediating countries wholly satisfactory, but the possibility for dialogue remains.

**11 September 2006** Defence Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Sergey Ivanov says that Russian troops will not take part in peacekeeping in Lebanon but will help rebuild the infrastructure in that country. He says that engineering troops will be ready to leave by the end of the month. Vladimir Putin has instructed the head of his administration, Sergey Sobyenin, to prepare the appropriate communication to the Federation Council.

**11 September 2006** The chairman of the Federation Council's international affairs committee, Mikhail Margelov says that when discussing the consequences of the 11 September tragedy, we should remember that it was this that highlighted the common nature of the fundamental interests of Russia and the USA. He says that the main lesson of 11 September was that world politics could not be the sole preserve of any one or any one group of powers, "when the world is becoming more inter-linked and inter-dependent". The head of the Duma Committee on the CIS and Relations with Compatriots, Andrey Kokoshin, says the war in Iraq unleashed by the USA and Great Britain has done serious damage to the international community's efforts to combat terrorism.

**11 September 2006** Georgian border police state that the Russian dry-cargo ship Patrushev has been arrested off the Ajarian shore. The ship had entered the zone closed for navigation.

**12 September 2006** Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says it was the lack of a legal framework that made it impossible to hold the Torgau-2006 Russian-US exercises. In 2005, the Russian Foreign Ministry and NATO countries signed the Status of Forces agreement. Under its terms, military units can be sent to other countries for exercises and training in accordance with clear legal rules. The agreement has been signed but not ratified.

**12 September 2006** The MFA says it hopes that Israel will respond to the Palestinian National Administration's plans to include representatives of Fatah and Hamas in the new government.

Presidential aide Sergey Prikhodko rejects the view expressed by a number of politicians that the role of Russian diplomacy in the Middle East has become weaker because of the conflict on the border between Lebanon and Israel. He says contacts with Hamas are useful.

Security Council Secretary Igor Ivanov meets with his Israeli counterpart Ilan Mizrahi in Moscow.

**12 September 2006** Presidential aide Sergey Prikhodko says the international community should take more time with Iran. "Sanctions are an unusual event in international practice and are usually applied when something has started to happen which violates international law. Time will tell how we will react if it is proved that there has been some kind of violation (by Iran of the nuclear nonproliferation regime)." He says Moscow wants the Iranian nuclear problem to be settled through diplomacy.

Sergey Prikhodko says Moscow is interested in the United States' new leadership being predictable and ensuring consistency in relations with Russia. "The

American colleagues are now entering an intensive phase (of the electoral campaign). We would like consistency to be ensured, so that the new authorities are predictable. This is a very important issue for us."

**13 September 2006** Minister of Trade and Economic Development German Gref says that negotiations with the WTO should be completed in October, and Russia could well be a fully-fledged WTO member in the first half of 2007. At the moment the main obstacle to Russia joining is the USA, as well as Georgia just recently.

**13 September 2006** The MFA says it is satisfied with the outcome of the recent ministerial meeting of oil exporters. Foreign Ministry spokesman Mikhail Kamynin states: "As expected, the decision was made to maintain the quota for oil production at its current level of 28m barrels a day. Given that the market has enough crude, this facilitates price stability." He says the OPEC leadership confirms its readiness to broaden cooperation with Russia, including within the framework of Russian chairmanship in G8.

**13 September 2006** The MFA criticises European nations who reject the Transdnestrian referendum on independence.

The office of the Georgian minister for conflict settlement Merab Antadze expressed its concern over recent remarks by Duma speaker Boris Gryzlov about the referendum on independence to be held in breakaway South Ossetia.

The MFA says that Russia "views as counterproductive attempts to dismantle the existing mechanisms of settling the Nagornyy Karabakh, Georgian-Abkhazian, Georgian-South Ossetian and Dniester conflicts".

**13 September 2006** Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says the Russian engineering and sapper battalion which is to leave for Lebanon will comprise 350-400 contract-based servicemen. It will leave in late September - early October.

**14 September 2006** The MFA calls on the Ukrainian side "to refrain from actions which could exacerbate the already complicated situation over navigational and hydrographic facilities in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov, and to continue the search for a solution to existing problems solely through talks". The MFA is commenting on the decision of the Sevastopol economic court to remove navigational and hydrographic facilities located on Ukrainian territory from the jurisdiction of the Russian Black Sea Fleet.

**14 September 2006** The MFA protests to the US embassy over a conference in Washington on the North Caucasus, which is being attended by the former Maskhadov emissary Vachagayev.

**14 September 2006** The MFA says the presence of Russian peacekeepers in Abkhazia and South Ossetia is vitally important against the background of military threats and provocations from the Georgian side.

**14 September 2006** The MFA states that Moscow feels that the situation in Afghanistan must remain under the close control of the UN Security Council.

**14 September 2006** Sergey Lavrov is interviewed on TV on the Middle East.

**14 September 2006** Sergey Lavrov calls for calm over the Transdnestrian referendum of 17 September. The referendum has the aim of deciding whether the

region should be reunited with Moldova or be independent and even possibly join Russia in the future.

**14 September 2006** Russia and the US sign an agreement on Pacific coastguard cooperation in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy to carry out joint operations between the Russian and US coast guards on the Pacific Ocean border of the two countries in 2007. The agreement primarily concerns border protection and the fight against illegal fishing.

**14 September 2006** The first deputy chairman of the Duma committee on international affairs, Leonid Slutskiy, does not rule out the possibility that Russia may join in economic sanctions against Tehran if Iran refuses to reach a compromise with the international community on its nuclear programme.

**14 September 2006** Gazprom chairman Aleksey Miller tells Vladimir Putin that a consortium had been set up with Hungary's MOL and a feasibility study would be ready by the end of the year. Gazprom is working on the possibility of laying a southern-bound pipeline, Blue Stream 2. Miller says:

"Turkey is not currently a transit country for Russian gas. We can see, however, that there is additional demand in countries like Greece and, to some extent, Italy. We are working on the possibility of supplying gas to Turkey, Greece and Italy...We are engaged in talks with our Italian and Greek partners. We are also looking into the possibility of increasing supplies to Romania, Hungary and Austria. To this end we have set up a project company with MOL. It will draft a feasibility study for the route this year."

He also says the possibility of laying a gas pipeline from Turkish territory to Israel is under consideration. "We expect Israel will decide once and for all whether or not to purchase Russian gas in the very near future."

**15 September 2006** Agriculture Minister Aleksey Gordeyev says up to 25 per cent of sugar imports to Russia should come from Ukraine.

**15 September 2006** Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov receives South Ossetian leader Eduard Kokoyty. The MFA condemns Georgian opposition to Russian peace keeping forces in South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

**15 September 2006** Talgat Tadzhuddin, supreme mufti of the Central Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Russia, condemns Pope Benedict XVI's remarks on Islam.

**15 September 2006** Russia's permanent representative at the UN, Vitaliy Churkin, says Russia is convinced that the foreign military presence in Iraq "must not become permanent and open-ended". He says that "all foreign troops must eventually leave Iraqi territory and hand over responsibility for events there to the national army and police". He is speaking at a UNSC meeting on Iraq.

**15 September 2006** The Duma ratifies the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. In this area Russia will cooperate with all countries that have the necessary potential for it.

**15 September 2006** Lt-Gen Ivan Tsygankov, the head of the reconnaissance group of the MOD, states that representatives of Russia and Lebanon agree on issues

concerning three bridges that will be rebuilt in Lebanon by the Russian military. The MOD plans to rebuild six bridges in total.

**15 September 2006** Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov has talks in Moscow with his Turkish defence minister Vecdi Gonul. Russia will join operation "Black Sea Harmony".

**16 September 2006** The state secretary of the Union State of Russia and Belarus, Pavel Borodin, and Vladimir Putin meet in Sochi. He says Belarus is failing to keep union agreements.

**16 September 2006** Defence minister Sergey Ivanov says that the Russian bridge construction battalion should arrive in Lebanon in early October and complete the reconstruction work in Lebanon within three months.

**17 September 2006** Finance Minister Aleksey Kudrin says that Russia will sign an agreement to write off the Iraqi debt in the next few months.

**17 September 2006** Vladimir Putin meets the heads of G8 parliaments at his Bocharov Ruchey residence in Sochi. He discusses energy security. He says Russia plans to increase Russian oil exports to countries of the Asia-Pacific region from the current level of around three per cent to no less than 30 per cent of our total exports in ten years' time. Russia will carry out two major transport projects in order to supply gas to the People's Republic of China. He also says that Russia has been steadily following a path of diversifying supply routes and increasing their reliability. The construction of the North European gas pipeline has started. An oil pipeline from Siberia to the Pacific coast is being built. Recently Russia reached an agreement with Bulgaria and Greece to speed up the construction of another project - the Trans-Balkan pipeline Burgas-Alexandroupolis.

**18 September 2006** Hungarian Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsany has talks in Sochi with Vladimir Putin and discusses economic relations.

**19 September 2006** Sergey Lavrov has talks with the head of the Arab League Amr Musa. He says that it is essential "to urgently resume the peace process in the Middle East, emphasizing its comprehensive nature".

**19 September 2006** The head of Rosatom Sergey Kiriyyenko has talks with IAEA Director-General Muhammad al-Baradi'i. He states: "Russia's position on Iran's nuclear programme has not changed. We believe this issue can be resolved through agreement, and therefore a diplomatic solution to the present situation needs to be found."

**19 September 2006** The head of Federation Council's Committee for International Affairs, Mikhail Margelov says that the international community "does not intend to force the Iranian leadership into a dead end and wants to diffuse the situation through political means".

**19 September 2006** The head of the Duma international affairs committee, Konstantin Kosachev, does not consider it necessary for NATO to expand in order to oppose new challenges and urges the alliance to "rid" the process of addressing this issue of mercenary considerations.

"Russia is a member of the Collective Security Treaty Organization and at the same time it cooperates with NATO closely, and I do not see any contradiction here. NATO is not perceived as an enemy, as an

adversary...When we say that we cannot agree to NATO's further expansion we view this issue exclusively in a practical dimension. We do not see any sense in this from the point of view of the global problems faced by humanity...In countering these problems, NATO has proved to be an absolutely inefficient organization. It is enough to look at what is happening in Afghanistan today...Ukraine's possible entry to NATO, ignoring the opinion of the Ukrainian people, would result in the disruption of absolutely unique cooperation ties between the military-industrial complexes of Russia and Ukraine. Neither Russia nor Ukraine needs this."

Sergey Lavrov says that Russia has reiterated its proposal to NATO concerning a joint security operation with the alliance and with Belarus in Afghanistan.

**19 September 2006** Konstantin Kosachev, the head of the Duma's committee on international affairs, says Russian-Belarusian relations "cannot be built on the principle of constant subsidizing of the Belarusian economy by Russia". "We have a number of wishes as regards reforms in Belarus, which are lagging behind those in Russia and hampering the development of the union state."

**19 September 2006** Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Grushko and OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights Director Christian Strohal meet in Moscow. Grushko says that he believes that substantial reforms are needed in the activities of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

**19 September 2006** The Federal Service for Military-Technical Cooperation (FSVTS) says it plans to intensify its dialogue with leaders of African countries on marketing of Russian weapons in Africa during an arms fair to be held in South Africa.

**20 September 2006** Vladimir Putin has talks in Sochi with Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov and Uzbek defence minister counterpart Ruslan Mirzayev.

**20 September 2006** The Georgian MOD welcomes Russia's decision to complete the withdrawal of military hardware from its bases in Akhalkalaki and Batumi ahead of schedule.

The leader of unrecognized South Ossetia, Eduard Kokoyty, visits Russia. He calls for South Ossetia to join Russia.

**20 September 2006** The MFA says Russia is in favour of "limiting any increase in membership of the UN Security Council".

**20 September 2006** Sergey Lavrov says at the UN General Assembly that the key to success in resolving the Iran nuclear issue "lies in observing the nonproliferation regime...if we follow this thesis, we can win and resolve this problem...the UN is not discussing the issue of imposing sanctions on Iran...negotiations in the six-party format continue, and we continue to stand by the proposals already sent to Iran." He hopes that the UN Security Council resolution adopted at the end of July 2006 and other decisions made by the Security Council "will help resolve the Iran nuclear issue".

**20 September 2006** Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Saltanov says that the Middle East quartet of international mediators (the UN, the EU, Russia and the

USA) favours a comprehensive solution to the Middle East problem. "This means that the solution should extend not just to the Palestinian issue but also to other problems, such as the Golan Heights."

**20 September 2006** Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has talks with NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer. He expresses concern about the reconfiguration of NATO forces in Europe as well as about the expansion of the alliance.

"During the NATO secretary-general's visit to Moscow in October we intend to discuss the questions which cause Russia's concern. The reconfiguration of NATO forces in Europe and the USA's plans to deploy some elements of missile systems in Europe are the issues that arouse our concern...We are openly speaking about the issues that worry us and our dialogue is continuing. We want this and, in particular, the issue of the American forces to be discussed and the decisions to be coordinated. NATO knows that Russia's concerns are legitimate and justified...NATO will expand. This is a fact but we are still convinced that it is a mistake. However, we are continuing negotiations and making our stand clear, presenting our arguments. In the age of global threats the instruments of the cold war are ineffective. There are many ways to cooperate with NATO countries, ways which will contribute to the fight against terrorism and other threats and challenges."

**20 September 2006** Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov meets Vietnamese Vice-President Truong My Hoa in Moscow.

**21 September 2006** Sergey Lavrov says the Middle East quartet of international mediators (the United Nations, the European Union, Russia and the USA) supports the efforts of the head of the Palestinian Authority Mahmud Abbas to form a government of national unity. He says that Hamas should show as constructive a position as possible in negotiations with Israel.

**21 September 2006** The president of Transdnestr Igor Smirnov calls for increasing the number of Russian peacekeepers in the unrecognized republic. Initially the Russian contingent amounted to 3,100 people. However, it now stands at 385.

Sergey Lavrov rejects the idea of discussing 'frozen' conflicts in the post-Soviet at the UN.

**21 September 2006** Sergey Lavrov says currently "efforts are being made to create the conditions for a bilateral dialogue between the USA and North Korea". He also affirms that the six-sided talks must be continued. He says that Russia will not take part in discussion of the Korean nuclear problem within the UN.

**21 September 2006** The Russian foreign minister's special envoy to the Balkans, Aleksandr Botsan-Kharchenko, attends a meeting of the Contact Group on Kosovo, which was attended by representatives of the Russian Federation, the USA, Great Britain, France, Germany and Italy. Botsan-Kharchenko says "it is unrealistic to expect negotiated solutions or a compromise between Belgrade and Pristina before the end of the year". He says Russia "is dead against setting any artificial deadlines for this process". "Unilateral decisions and the foisting of Kosovo's independent status on Belgrade are unacceptable."

Sergey Lavrov says that Russia stresses the need for the use of universal principles when tackling the question of the status of Kosovo province. Lavrov "pointed to the

need for universal principles of international law to be used as a basis for a Kosovo settlement, bearing in mind that it has a nature of a precedent for the Balkans, Europe and the world as a whole."

**21 September 2006** Sentence is passed on the Japanese fishing boat captain whose boat entered Russian territorial waters on 16 August. The Japanese government says that it does not recognize the verdict handed down by Sakhalin court to captain Noboru Sakashita. A month ago his ship was seized for poaching in Russian waters. The court announced the verdict: to fine the captain and to confiscate the ship. Tokyo responds by saying that the court was not a legitimate one as the Kuril islands are not part of Russian territory.

**21 September 2006** The first deputy industry and energy minister of Russia, Andrey Reus says Russia intends to increase the share of the Asia-Pacific region in its oil exports, taking into account eastern projects and Sakhalin shelf, from the current 3 per cent to 30 per cent and gas from 5 per cent to 25 per cent by the year 2020. A large part of this oil and gas will go to China.

**22 September 2006** Finance Minister Aleksey Kudrin says that by redeeming its foreign debt ahead of schedule, Russia has totally eliminated the possibility of the kind of default that happened to the country in 1998. He is addressing the Duma on the draft budget for 2007. He says Russia's gold and hard currency reserves have increased. By the end of 2006 they will amount to 369.6bn dollars. He says that by the end of 2007 Russia will have recovered all the GDP and industrial potential lost since 1990.

**22 September 2006** Vladimir Putin visits France. He discusses energy relations.

**22 September 2006** The MFA criticises the possibility of Georgia's accession to an untransformed NATO. The MFA issues this statement in Moscow in connection with the NATO Council's decision to start an "intensive dialogue" with Georgia:

"Any enlargement of NATO results in fundamental changes in the area of security. But Georgia's case is a special one because of its geographical closeness to Russia and the obvious complexity of Caucasus problems. Georgia's accession to the present, untransformed NATO will, if this idea is implemented, seriously affect Russia's political, military and economic interests and have a negative impact on the fragile Caucasus situation."

The deputy head of the MFA's information department, Boris Malakhov, states:

"The nature of new risks and security threats requires practices of international cooperation which are completely different from such as the enlargement of military-political unions established during the Cold War years. Any enlargement of NATO results in fundamental changes in the area of security. But Georgia's case is a special one because of its geographical closeness to Russia and the obvious complexity of Caucasus problems. Georgia's accession to the present, untransformed NATO will, if this idea is implemented, seriously affect Russia's political, military and economic interests and have a negative impact on the fragile Caucasus situation."

Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov states:

"I am sick and tired of questions about Georgia. You get the impression that Georgia is the umbilical cord of Russian foreign policy. For the 126th time I wish to say that joining or not joining NATO is Georgia's sovereign right. We made our plans known a long time ago. We are actively developing two alpine brigades with the latest equipment. Both brigades will be stationed right by the border with Georgia. Therefore, Russia's security will not suffer if Georgia joins NATO."

Sergey Lavrov at the UN criticises Georgian president Mikheil Saakashvili's demand that Russian peacekeepers be withdrawn from the zone of conflicts on the country's territory. He says this will complicate efforts by Russia and other mediators and the process of settling conflicts in South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

**22 September 2006** Sergey Lavrov meets at the UN with Council of Europe Secretary-General Terry Davis, OSCE Chairman-in-Office Karel De Gucht and OSCE Secretary-General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut. Lavrov says Russia deems inadmissible the practice under which the OSCE takes decisions on election monitoring without clear criteria. He says that ODHIR is unprepared for the forthcoming 7 October parliamentary election in Latvia.

Lavrov has discussions at the UN with EU foreign ministers.

Sergey Lavrov addresses the 61<sup>st</sup> UN General Assembly.

"The dominant trend is the realization of the need to reinforce the collective foundations in world politics, the recognition that there is no alternative to solving current problems by multipolar diplomatic means. We expect NATO to be transformed from a defence alliance into something more modern that conforms to the principles of transparency and collective response on a universal legal basis."

He calls for more effective measures to enforce non-proliferation.

Apart from the purposeful steps already being taken to negotiate towards solutions to separate problems such as the Iranian nuclear problem and the nuclear problem of the Korean Peninsula, urgent collective efforts of the entire international community are required towards systemic enforcement of the non-proliferation regimes on a universally acceptable basis, while simultaneously ensuring the lawful access of all states to the benefits of the peaceful atom...

...The increasing importance of the force factor in international affairs that, sadly, we are witnessing, negatively affects the non-proliferation regimes. The deficit of predictability and stability in the sphere of security is manifesting more and more. Against this backdrop, even the objectively increasing interest of many countries in nuclear energy may become a source of concern as a result of the trend towards global proliferation of sensitive technologies.

Sergey Lavrov has talks with US State Secretary Condoleezza Rice.

**22 September 2006** Vladimir Putin meets Crown Prince of the United Arab Emirates Muhammad Al Nuhayan in the Kremlin.

**22 September 2006** The heads of the Russian and Ukrainian governments, Mikhail Fradkov and Viktor Yanukovych, hold talks in Moscow on gas. Ukrainian

Fuel and Energy Minister Yuriy Boyko says Russia will ensure the supply of up to 62bn cu.m. of gas to Ukraine annually in 2007-9. Boyko says that the last round of talks was difficult, and that the price of gas to be supplied to Ukraine in the fourth quarter of 2006 and in 2007-9 was not agreed.

**22 September 2006** First Deputy Prime Minister Dmitriy Medvedev visits Kazakhstan and has talks with Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev.

**22 September 2006** Chairman of the Federation Council committee for international affairs Mikhail Margelov expresses concern over manifestations of Nazism in the Baltic states.

**22 September 2006** Defence minister Sergey Ivanov says: "two leading states, Russia and Turkey - countries which have modern navies - are responsible for security in the Black Sea area...security in the Black Sea area must be preserved only by Black Sea countries".

**23 September 2006** Vladimir Putin has a summit with French President Jacques Chirac and German Chancellor Angela Merkel in Compiègne, France. He says Russia will either endorse a new Energy Charter or introduce a new provision in the original text. He discusses Russian involvement in EADS and Lebanon.

**23 September 2006** Sergey Lavrov meets EU foreign ministers at the UN. He stresses the need to ratify the agreement on simplifying the visa regime and re-admission. He says Russia and the EU desire to conclude a new cooperation treaty.

Lavrov has talks at the UN with his Iraqi counterpart Hoshyar Zebari.

**23 September 2006** An agreement is signed in Beirut on the status of the Russian military formation to be sent to Lebanon to assist in the reconstruction of the country's infrastructure destroyed by war.

**23 September 2006** The MOD states that the Georgian president's accusations against the Russian peacekeepers in Abkhazia and South Ossetia are groundless and unfounded.

**23 September 2006** Russian and Uzbek subunits hold an anti-terrorist exercise in Krasnodar Territory.

**24 September 2006** Sergey Lavrov expresses confidence that the possibility of a politico-diplomatic solution to the Iran nuclear problem remains.

**25 September 2006** The head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organization Gholamreza Aqazadeh has talks with the head of Rosatom, Sergey Kiriyyenko.

**25 September 2006** Sergey Ivanov says US sanctions against the companies Sukhoi and Rosoboronekспорт will not prompt a review of contracts on the delivery of Russian weapons to Venezuela, Iran and other countries.

**26 September 2006** Sergey Lavrov addresses the World Affairs Council in Los Angeles:

"We cannot join in ultimatums which will lead everyone down a blind alley, create a new crisis in the area which is already seriously destabilised and deal a blow to the authority of the UN Security Council,

if this most important body in the sphere of international security embarks on a path of unrealistic policy...Nobody needs an Iran with a nuclear bomb, but it is extremely dangerous to join in a fruitless confrontation. Settlement is reached by involving 'problem' states, not isolating them."

It is announced that the physical launch of the Bushehr nuclear power station will take place in September 2007, and the energy launch in November 2007. The head of Atomstroyeksport Sergey Shmatko addresses reporters together with the vice president of Iran's Atomic Energy Organization, Mohamed Janatiyan. He states:

"Following today's talks, we signed an additional agreement to the contract for the construction of the Bushehr nuclear power station, envisaging the following stages for completion of construction of the Bushehr nuclear power station: energy launch in November 2007 and physical launch in September 2007. The fuel will be supplied no later than six months prior to the physical launch."

Security Council Secretary Igor Ivanov and Vice-President and head of the Iranian Atomic Energy Organization Gholamreza Aqazadeh have talks in Moscow.

**26 September 2006** The MFA says it believes that the idea of the Georgian Foreign Ministry to organize a trip to the Kodori gorge for the heads of diplomatic missions accredited in Tbilisi is "dangerous".

**26 September 2006** The general director of Zarubezhneftegaz (operator of all Gazprom's projects abroad), Valeriy Gulev, has talks with the heads of the Venezuelan Energy and Petroleum Ministry as well as the state oil and gas company Petroleos de Venezuela (PDVSA). The vice-president of LUKoil, LUKoil-Overseas Chairman Andrey Kuzyayev, meets Venezuelan Minister of Energy and Petroleum Rafael Ramirez, who is also president of PDVSA.

**26 September 2006** The MFA rejects criticisms made of religious freedom in Russia by the US State Department.

**27 September 2006** Georgian civilian and military police surround the Tbilisi headquarters of the Group of Russian Troops in the Transcaucasus. Interior Minister Vano Merabishvili says that Georgian counterintelligence services have arrested four officers from the GRU, and 11 Georgian citizens. The Georgian authorities are demanding that another Russian officer be handed over to them. The Russian MFA protests about the arrest of the Russian officers.

**27 September 2006** The British Midland Resources Holding Ltd officially hands the management of the Electricity Networks of Armenia to Russia's Inter RAO Unified Energy Systems of Russia.

**27 September 2006** The MFA criticises discrimination against the Russian language in Ukraine by Ukrainian regional organs.

**27 September 2006** Singapore Defence Minister Teo Chee Hean has talks in Moscow with Deputy Minister and Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov.

**28 September 2006** At Russia's request the UN Security Council holds an emergency consultation on the issue of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict.

Sergey Ivanov and Sergey Lavrov strongly condemn the Georgian authorities' detention of Russian officers in Tbilisi.

The Georgian MOD claims that Russian forces have been supplying South Ossetian forces with anti aircraft systems.

**28 September 2006** Federation Council speaker Sergey Mironov warns that Georgian actions could lead to war. The chairman of the Federation Council committee for CIS affairs, Vadim Gustov, warns that NATO could be behind Georgian actions over the arrest of Russian officers in Tbilisi. The chairman of the committee of the Federation Council for constitutional legislation, Yuriy Sharandin, says the situation in Georgia warrants attention at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) session to open on 30 September. Deputy Duma speaker, Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, calls for a tough approach towards Georgia.

Deputy chairman of the Russian State Duma International Affairs Committee Leonid Slutskiy says Russia will not let Georgia draw it into a military conflict.

**28 September 2006** Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov visits Cuba. A new loan agreement is reached. Cuba's debt of \$160 million is rescheduled and loans of 355 million dollars are made.

**28 September 2006** Ukrainian Fuel and Energy Minister Yuriy Boyko says that in 2007 Ukraine will receive Russian gas at a lower price than its neighbours.

**28 September 2006** The head of Rosatom Sergey Kiriyyenko says Russia sees no obstacles to continuing cooperation with Iran.

**29 September 2006** the Russian ambassador to Georgia, Vyacheslav Kovalenko, says Russian diplomats and members of their families remaining in Georgia will soon be evacuated from the country by sea,. He says diplomatic relations have not been broken. Kovalenko confirms that Lt-Col Konstantin Pichugin is on the territory of the staff building of the Russian Group of Troops in the Transcaucasus in Tbilisi and will not be handed over to the Georgian authorities. A meeting between Russian and Georgian Deputy Foreign Ministers Grigoriy Karasin and Giorgi Manjgaladze due to take place in Moscow is cancelled.

The deputy prime minister and defence minister, Sergey Ivanov, thinks the aim of the Georgian leadership, before it applies to join NATO, is to drive the Russian peacekeepers out of its conflict zones and impose a military solution to the frozen conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. He accuses some NATO members of illegal arms supplies to Georgia.

“The issue is that some NATO countries, which I would describe as young NATO members, are supplying Georgia with Soviet-made arms and ammunition, which in the past were supplied to those countries by the Soviet Union with an end-user certificate, which means that these weapons cannot be passed on to a third country. In this particular case, a number of NATO countries are breaching the universally accepted worldwide rules that govern the arms trade, and in effect are discrediting the end-user certificate.”

Chairman of the Duma committee for CIS affairs and relations with compatriots Andrey Kokoshin states:

“I think that if this abominable policy does not stop and clearly gets worse, then we have every reason to adopt a range of harsh measures against the current Georgian leadership, but these, unfortunately, will obviously affect Georgia as a whole. Georgia, under the current regime, is moving at full steam towards becoming a failed state. According to all international standards, such states are considered a serious threat to international security and stability. And if such a threat arises, the state that is suffering because of the emergence of this failed state has the right to take all kinds of different measures in order to defend its national interests.”

The head of the Duma committee for international affairs, Konstantin Kosachev, rules out the use of force against Georgia.

Vladimir Zhirinovskiy and Gennady Zyuganov blame the Russian-Georgian crisis on the USA.

Maj-Gen Andrey Popov, commander of the Group of Russian Troops in the Transcaucasus say Moscow may reconsider the timeframe for the withdrawal of its military bases from Georgia if Tbilisi continues to pursue a provocative and hostile policy towards Russia and its servicemen.

The head of the CSTO, Secretary-General Nikolay Bordyuzha, says that Georgia is currently seeking to provoke Russia into using force.

The chairman of the Duma international affairs committee, Konstantin Kosachev says it would be "premature" for Russia to unilaterally recognize the independence of South Ossetia, Abkhazia or the Dniester region.

“We would find ourselves all alone and this would have no political or legal consequences...However, the situation is developing. If Kosovo's status is recognized, the Russian position will definitely be spelt out...the referendum in the Dniester region, the status of Kosovo and the question of independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia are closely connected”.

