

## Russian Foreign Policy: A Chronology

### October – December 2006

**1 October 2006** Vladimir Putin describes the actions of the Georgian leadership as an act of state terrorism involving hostage-taking. Putin instructs the MOD to continue withdrawing forces from Georgia.

Commander of the Group of Russian Troops in the Transcaucasus Andrey Popov says the Russian military bases in Georgia have been put on high alert. He says that if tension grows about the Russian bases in Georgia, the withdrawal from Batumi and Akhalkalaki "will be physically impossible".

**1 October 2006** A ship carrying construction equipment has leaves Novorossiysk for Lebanon in the framework of the Russian programme for helping this country handle the consequences of the armed conflict.

**1 October 2006** The 13th session of the Russian-French council for economic, financial, industrial and trade issues meets. Trade between Russia and France will exceed 10 billion dollars in 2006. Trade between the two countries reached 9.8 billion dollars in 2005.

**2 October 2006** Vladimir Putin and US President George Bush discuss by telephone Iran and Georgia. Putin warns Bush against third countries' interference in Georgia.

The four Russian officers arrested in Georgia return to Moscow.

**2 October 2006** Duma speaker Boris Gryzlov states that the Duma is going to ban money transfers from Russia to the CIS countries.

**2 October 2006** The secretary of the Security Council, Igor Ivanov, travels to Iran for talks with the secretary of the Supreme National Security Council of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ali Larijani.

**2 October 2006** The Foreign Ministry (MFA) says it welcomes the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon. It says Russia "will continue working with all the parties in order to promote a stable settlement between Lebanon and Israel with a view to securing universal peace in the Middle East".

**2 October 2006** Japan sends to the Kuril island of Kunashir almost half a million roubles in payment of the fine which Russia imposed on the skipper of a vessel caught poaching in August, Noboru Sakashita.

Russian warships arrive in Japan for a joint Russian-Japanese communication and manoeuvring exercise.

**3 October 2006** Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov gives a news conference in Moscow. He criticises Georgia harshly.

The MOD states that Moscow has broken off all military contacts with Tbilisi except those concerning the withdrawal of Russian military bases from Georgia.

Mikhail Tyurkin, deputy director of the Russian Federal Migration Service, says Russia is calling on Belarus to introduce a visa regime for Georgian citizens.

Vladimir Putin has presented the agreement on the withdrawal of Russian military bases from Georgia to the Duma for ratification. The chairman of the Duma's CIS committee Sergey Baburin says that not all possible sanctions had been used up and that if Georgia continues its anti-Russian policies, other means of punishment will be applied. He adds that Russia should use military means to resolve problems with Georgia.

Liberal Democratic Party of Russia leader and deputy speaker of the Duma Vladimir Zhirinovskiy says that the USA is behind the Georgian crisis. He calls for Russian military intervention in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and an economic blockade of Georgia.

**3 October 2006** The MFA says it has:

heard with deep concern of the announcement by the DPRK Foreign Ministry that Pyongyang intends to carry out nuclear tests...Such a move, no matter what the motivation, would not be in keeping with the declared aspiration for a denuclearized Korea and would only lead to still further complication of the military-political situation on the Korean Peninsula and also to a further erosion of the international system of nuclear non-proliferation...We note with respect and attention the DPRK's concerns for its security...However, we consider that a resolution of this problem must be sought in the context of the six-sided negotiating process.

Sergey Lavrov says he hopes that "the six-sided talks on North Korea's nuclear problem will resume soon".

**3 October 2006** The MFA backs the candidacy of Republic of Korea Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon as the next UN Secretary-General.

**3 October 2006** A Russian engineering battalion flies to Beirut to help rebuild bridges in Lebanon.

**3 October 2006** Vladimir Putin and Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbaev meet in Uralsk. They sign an agreement to set up a gas joint venture based on the Orenburg gas refinery, on 50:50 ownership terms.

**3 October 2006** The Minister of Industry and Energy Viktor Khristenko says the Eurasian Development Bank is open to new participants. The agreement on founding the Eurasian bank was signed between the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan on 12 January 2006. Russia's share of the bank's authorized capital is 1 billion dollars and Kazakhstan's is 500 million dollars.

**3 October 2006** A group of Russian government experts arrives in Moldova. The Moldovan-Russian intergovernmental commission for trade and economic cooperation will meet.

**4 October 2006** Vladimir Putin warns Georgia about the inadmissibility of conducting a dialogue with Russia using the language of provocations.

Sergey Lavrov has a telephone conversation with Karel De Gucht, the OSCE chairman-in-office and Belgian foreign minister. He says Russia does not need outside help in its relationship with Georgia.

Sergey Lavrov visits the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) in Strasbourg. He condemns Georgia and says outside forces are backing Tbilisi.

Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says Russia may speed up the withdrawal of Russian military bases from Georgia. According to an agreement signed in March 2006, the military base in Akhalkalaki should be removed by 1 October 2007, and the one in Batumi by the end of 2008.

The Duma issues a statement on the Georgia situation, "On the anti-Russian and anti-democratic position of the Georgian authorities". It calls for economic sanctions against the regime in Tbilisi.

Russia submits a draft resolution on Georgia to the UN Security Council. Moscow proposes that the mandate of peacekeeping forces in the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict area be extended. It also intends to demand that Tbilisi withdraw its troops from the upper part of the Kodori Gorge.

Two Georgian ships are detained at Novorossiysk port and banned from transporting cargo.

**4 October 2006** Belarusian Energy Minister Alyaksandr Azyarets says Russian gas transit via Belarus will increase up to 61.1 billion cu.m. by 2010 (from 40.8 billion cu.m. in 2005). A total of 43.9 billion cu.m. of gas will be transported via Belarus in 2006.

**4 October 2006** Kyrgyz Prime Minister Feliks Kulov has talks in Bishkek with Russian Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov. A Russian military delegation is visiting Kyrgyzstan. Russian military hardware and property worth 2.5 million dollars will be handed over to the Kyrgyz armed forces.

**4 October 2006** Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says Russia "has certain worries that possible nuclear tests in North Korea may inflict ecological damage on the Russian Federation".

**4 October 2006** Sergey Lavrov and his South Korean counterpart, Ban Ki-moon, discuss the North Korean nuclear problem by telephone.

**4 October 2006** Rosatom head Sergey Kiriyenko says that Russia has confirmed its proposal to set up in Russia a joint venture with Iran to enrich and process uranium.

**4 October 2006** Sergey Lavrov at PACE condemns further NATO widening. "If the alliance wants to transform itself out of the bloc whose purpose was to defend its members into something modern and aimed at combating new challenges and threats, there are specific forms of cooperation. We cannot ban anyone from entering where one or other country may want to enter...The enlargement of the alliance is an old approach, the inertia of the past." He criticises Georgia's possible accession to NATO. He calls for greater tolerance in Europe between various peoples, religions and cultures and urges PACE to sort out electoral monitoring procedures.

**4 October 2006** Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov rejects Georgia's call for Russia to discontinue its naval exercise near Georgia's sea borders.

**5 October 2006** Former Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov describes the Russian leadership's behaviour towards Georgia as "unseemly and incompatible with the status as a great power".

**5 October 2006** The British-South African mining corporation Anglo American and the Russian steel company Severstal sign an agreement on the formation of an alliance to explore nickel, copper and zinc deposits in Russia.

**5 October 2006** Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov says that the northern gas pipeline that Russia is building jointly with Germany under the Baltic Sea, bypassing Poland, will pose no threat to either Poland's or the EU's energy security.

It is reported that Russia, Greece and Bulgaria have agreed that Russian companies will own 51 per cent of the Burgas-Alexandroupolis pipeline project.

Gazprom head Aleksey Miller and president of the Netherlands-based Gasunie company Marcel Kramer sign a memorandum of understanding on mutual participation by the two companies in the North European pipeline project and the Balgzand Bacton Line (BBL) project which will transport gas from the Netherlands to the UK, as well as the use of Gasunie's transit capacity.

**5 October 2006** Vladimir Putin appoints commander-in-Chief of Ground Troops Aleksey Maslov and Deputy Chief of General Staff Aleksandr Skvortsov official representatives of the president of the Russian Federation for the hearings by the chambers of the Federal Assembly of the issue of ratification of agreements between Russia and Georgia on the organization of transit of military cargoes and personnel through the territory of Georgia.

**5 October 2006** The final stage of the joint Russian-Kyrgyz military exercise is to be held in south Kyrgyzstan. Kyrgyz President Kurmanbek Bakiyev meets Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov.

**5 October 2006** Sergey Lavrov visits Poland. Lavrov says Russia will keep a watchful eye on the USA's plans to deploy a missile defence base in Poland. Lavrov says that that the United States' adopting legislation to impose sanctions on Iran has not helped the international community form a collective position in solving the Iranian nuclear problem.

For the time being we will look at what diplomatic measures can be used so that negotiations begin. Sanctions are an extreme measure. I repeat, we do not rule out the possibility of additional action on Iran, but that action must be aimed at achieving a single aim: to begin negotiations with the aim of reaching agreements that may guarantee the non-violation of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. We cannot support other broader, hidden aims regarding Iran.

**5 October 2006** Sergey Ivanov says Russia is ready to render any assistance, including military aid, to its allies in the CSTO.

**6 October 2006** Sergey Lavrov travels to London for a talk with the six on Iran. He says the USA's unilateral sanctions against Iran are not conducive to the

preparation of joint decisions by "the group of six". He says the Iran problem can be resolved through talks. He says that additional measures against Iran should be taken step by step. Sergey Lavrov says that Russia intends to hold consultations at the UN Security Council aimed at encouraging Iran to take part in negotiations.

**6 October 2006** Vladimir Putin says he believes that the OSCE must concentrate its efforts on encouraging the Georgian leadership to drastically change its course.

Sergey Lavrov says it is up to Georgia to normalize Russian-Georgian relations.

The Duma ratifies the agreement with Georgia on the transit of Russian troops and armaments via Georgian territory. An agreement on the procedure for the withdrawal of Russian military facilities from Georgia was submitted for ratification. The documents were signed in Sochi on 31 March 2006.

**6 October 2006** The minister of economic development and trade, German Gref, visits Azerbaijan.

**6 October 2006** A meeting between the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan takes place in Moscow.

**6 October 2006** Sergey Lavrov has talks with Afghan foreign minister Rangin Dadfar-Spanta.

**6 October 2006** Kazakh Education and Science Minister Byrganym Aytimova says Kazakhstan is working out, jointly with Russia, a state programme for the development of space activities in the country until 2020.

**8 October 2006** Sergey Ivanov warns Georgia against attacking South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

**9 October 2006** Armenian Defence Minister Serzh Sarkisyan says cargo transit from Armenia to Russia through Georgia and back will not be stopped.

**9 October 2006** Lt-Gen Vladimir Verkhovtsev, head of the 12th Main Directorate of the MOD, says national monitoring for nuclear control in Russia has recorded a test of a nuclear weapon in North Korea.

Vladimir Putin and his US counterpart George Bush discuss the North Korean nuclear test by telephone.

The MFA issues a statement condemning the North Korean nuclear test.

Lt-Gen Vasiliy Klyuchenok, first deputy head of the Federation Council defence and security committee, states: "The tactics of behaviour of the world powers with the states that are keen to get possession of nuclear weapons should be changed towards greater tolerance, towards broader diplomatic relations rather than boil down to economic or political sanctions."

The head of the Duma international affairs committee, Konstantin Kosachev, says:

What is happening is something that Russia has warned about many times: excessive pressure on North Korea, primarily on the part of the United States of America, will produce quite an opposite effect. As a matter of fact, this is precisely something that is happening now. After North Korea withdrew from the Non-Proliferation Treaty and stopped its cooperation with

the IAEA, it opted to hold nuclear tests. So far, this does not mean that North Korea has got possession of a nuclear weapon as such. This is probably a step towards that end.

**10 October 2006** Natural Resources Minister Yuriy Trutnev is in Helsinki at the first session of the Russia-EU Permanent Partnership Council on ecology. He says Russia does not intend to restrict foreign companies' involvement in developing energy resources, but there should be some limitations on foreign involvement in Russia's strategic energy reserves.

**10 October 2006** Vladimir Putin visits Dresden and has talks with German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Putin says joint Russian-German projects in power engineering, transport sector, aircraft construction and car manufacturing are developing successfully.

I would like to single out collaboration between Russian and German companies in the energy sector. Judging by everything, this sphere of our cooperation could be much greater, as a result of which the Federal Republic of Germany would turn from a consumer of Russian gas and oil into a large centre for European distribution of these products. This is our serious and weighty contribution to the cause of ensuring Europe's energy security.

...Germany is the main consumer of our energy resources. This in itself puts us in a certain position for each other in the sphere of energy cooperation. We are at present supplying to Germany approximately 40 billion cubic metres of natural gas and, I repeat, Germany is our largest end user. And if we implement the projects you asked about, if part of the natural gas from the Shtokman field - and this is a vast, simply unique field in the world, with reserves of 3,700 billion and possibly 4,000 billion cubic metres of gas - it will be developed over no less than 50-70 years.

And if we redirect from this field - as Madam Federal Chancellor asked me once at one of our first meetings in Moscow - part of the resources to Europe, and first of all to Germany, this would mean that Germany would receive, in addition to the 40 billion cubic metres it is receiving today, over the entire vast period of time about 50-55 billion cubic metres of gas every year. This means for Germany that it will become not simply a consumer but also a large European centre for the distribution of Russian gas in Europe. This will change the energy profile of Germany in this sense and will increase its role in European energy issues. We are doing this consciously, proceeding from the premise that Germany is a large consumer of our energy resources.

Naturally, we pay the closest attention to the implementation of the North European Gas Pipeline, because if it is not implemented, these plans cannot be fulfilled. We and, I am confident, the German economy are interested in the result of these plans but we do not intend to do this by damaging the environment. We will cooperate with environmental organizations, we will carry out the most rigorous expert assessments and abide by all their requirements in order to unconditionally fulfil the requirements of environmental services.

Putin also discusses the future of the European Aeronautic Defence and Space company, in which Gazprom has acquired 5 per cent of shares.

**10 October 2006** Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov states:

Irrespective of whether or not Georgia joins NATO, given the current policies of Georgia's leadership, we cannot encourage it to take further anti-Russian steps. How are we doing this? I think we are doing this in a civilized way. There is no talk of any military threats. One must be crazy to imagine a war between Russia and Georgia. We are exerting economic pressure. I admit that, but not sanctions or a blockade. In reality, there are neither sanctions nor a blockade. There are not. I am convinced that there are neither sanctions nor a blockade.

Army Gen Aleksey Maslov, commander-in-chief of Ground Forces, says Russia's military bases deployed in Georgia have lost their significance in the military sense. He says there are no tasks for them now and their stay on Georgian territory is pointless. He says all the equipment and property at Russia's military bases will be removed from Georgia precisely on schedule, by the end of 2008.

Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says that Russia has no plans to annex Georgia's breakaway regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

Different conflicts proceed in different ways. If we look at Abkhazia and South Ossetia, then there were no talks from the moment the Soviet Union collapsed. The moment it collapsed war began in both Abkhazia and South Ossetia. You know how it ended, how many thousands of people died. In order to end this orgy of bloodletting Russia sent in its peacekeepers, ended the war and the sides in the conflict signed the relevant agreements. But, it seems to me, over the last 15 years the Georgian leadership, not the current one but the previous one, has done everything to push these autonomous regions away.

These people were never citizens of Moldova or Georgia. They were citizens of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union collapsed, so what were people to do? In accordance with international legal, humanitarian norms and human rights standards, they were given a choice - do you want this new citizenship, this one, this one or this one? I think everyone can understand why they all chose Russian citizenship.

It turned out that on these territories up to 90 per cent of the population are Russian citizens - our citizens, ours - not yours. And so we are responsible for them, including for their security. We do not intend to annex these territories or make them part of Russia.

I understand that our peacekeepers are like a bone in the throat of the Georgian leadership. I understand this full well. But as they are there in accordance with the agreements, then they will remain there until both the internationally recognized sides in the conflict ask us to leave.

**10 October 2006** Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov confirms that the device tested by North Korea was a nuclear one.

The MFA says Russia is ready to take part in collective efforts to settle the situation concerning the DPRK in a peaceful manner.

**10 October 2006** Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says US plans to deploy an anti-missile shield in Poland were aimed at destabilizing the strategic balance.

We believe that the stated aim - that is setting up this third position area of anti-missile defence - does not match the threat, because the stated aim, I remind you, is intercepting Iranian intercontinental ballistic missiles, which there is no sign of, nor will there be in the foreseeable future. I think everybody in this hall understands who they could be used against. We view this as simply an element of destabilizing the situation, an attempt - an attempt and no more than that - to somewhat change the strategic balance. As for our measures in the sector of strategic offensive weapons, they are our measures, they are our problems and our solutions. As for Poland, I do not quite understand the Polish interest here, because I don't really think that having such a facility in place would please many, or even the majority of, European states.

**10 October 2006** Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says Russia will fulfil its contractual obligations and deliver Tor-M1 short-range air defence systems to Iran.

**10-11 October 2006** Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Grushko, Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, Daniel Fried, and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, Kurt Volker, meet in Washington. They discuss preparations for a regular OSCE ministerial meeting in Brussels on 4-5 December.

**11 October 2006** Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Alekseyev states:

The position of Russia in connection with the nuclear tests carried out in the DPRK is well known...We condemned this action, which leads to undermining the international regime of nuclear non-proliferation, and urged Pyongyang to return to the NPT as well to the table of talks...the Russia side is holding close consultations both within the framework of the UN Security Council and with our partners in six-party talks, including China, in order to consider the situation and develop an agreed position.

**12 October 2006** The European Court of Human Rights rules that the moral damage used by the Russian authorities to the Chechen Estamirov family is worth 220,000 euros. In February 2000, five civilians were shot dead. Their relatives found the dead bodies in the back yard of the house near Grozny. The court ruled that the Russian authorities had not fulfilled their obligation to investigate the people's deaths.

**12 October 2006** Vladimir Putin has talks with the speaker of the Ukrainian parliament, Oleksandr Moroz, in Moscow.

**12 October 2006** The MFA states that the international community must increase pressure on the current Georgian leadership to fundamentally adjust its policy towards Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

The Russian mission at the UN submits a "compromise" resolution on Georgia to the UN Security Council. The new text of the draft expresses 'concern' at Georgia's actions in the Kodori Gorge, which are in violation of the Moscow accords, and notes that the increase in tension in the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict zone is linked to actions by the Georgian side. Russia also proposes extending the mandate of peacekeepers in Abkhazia until 15 April 2007 and "calls on Georgia and Abkhazia to take the route of dialogue and a peace process".

UN military observers and CIS peacekeeping forces resume monitoring of the upper Kodori Gorge in Abkhazia (the only part of Abkhazia under Georgian control), which was suspended in the summer of 2003.

A North Ossetian parliamentary delegation visits South Ossetia.

**12 October 2006** MFA ambassador-at-large Valeriy Sukhinin says Moscow expects the six-party talks on the Korean nuclear problem will soon be resumed.

Igor Ostretsov, deputy director of the Scientific Research Institute of Nuclear Machine Building is interviewed in *Moskovskiy Komsomolets* on the North Korean nuclear test.

**12 October 2006** Sergey Lavrov says that Russia "will only conduct negotiations and participate in shaping global policies on equal terms". He states that "over the past 15 years, radical changes have taken place in the world, and Russia's strengthening has been an important factor in them".

**12 October 2006** Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Saltanov says Russia "will pursue a balanced, considered Middle East policy, equally close to its Israeli and Arab partners". He is attending the international conference "Russia-Israel: 15 years of international relations" in Moscow.

Russian military construction troops begin repair work on bridges in Lebanon.

**12 October 2006** The founding documents of three Russian-Kazakh joint ventures in the field of peaceful use of nuclear energy are signed in Moscow.

**12 October 2006** A Russian delegation led by Deputy Foreign Minister Grigoriy Karasin visits Moldova.

**13 October 2006** The 30th meeting of the CIS Electricity Council in Astana states that agreement has been reached on the synchronization of the energy systems of the CIS and the EU.

**13 October 2006** The MFA rejects suggestions that Russia and the USA "have swapped" UN Security Council resolutions on Georgia and North Korea.

Sergey Lavrov has talks in Moscow with Chinese State Councillor Tang Jiaxuan. He says Russia and China oppose sanctions against North Korea. Councillor Tang Jiaxuan later has talks with Security Council secretary Igor Ivanov.

Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Alekseyev visits North Korea. He says the DPRK has confirmed its commitment to six-party talks as the means of resolving the nuclear problem on the Korean Peninsula.

The head of the Duma committee for international affairs, Konstantin Kosachev, describes the USA's actions against North Korea as "clumsy" and "awkward".

**13 October 2006** The MFA welcomes the UN Security Council's decision to extend the mandate of the UN Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG). Sergey Lavrov says Moscow demands that Georgia immediately demilitarize the Kodori Gorge zone in accordance with the newly passed UN Security Council resolution and declares that it will monitor the implementation of the requirements set out in this document.

Vladimir Titov says that Russia will not tolerate Georgia's "anti-Russian rhetoric."

The Federation Council ratifies the Russian-Georgian agreement on the withdrawal of Russian military bases from Georgia. This process is expected to end in 2008. Federation Council Chairman Sergey Mironov says the withdrawal of Russian bases from Georgia is in Russia's interests and it can be accelerated. The Commander of the air force, Army Gen Vladimir Mikhaylov, says the manpower and resources of the Russian air force may be used to repel any possible attack by Georgia on Russian peacekeepers in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

The head of the Duma committee for international affairs, Konstantin Kosachev, says Russia will try to make sure that the results of the recent local elections in Georgia are studied by PACE.

**13 October 2006** Ukrainian Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich and Russian First Deputy Prime Minister Dmitriy Medvedev agree that the price of natural gas for Ukraine for 2007 will be set at a meeting of the intergovernmental committee on economic cooperation.

The United Energy Systems (UES) chairman Anatoliy Chubais says that during the winter maximum consumption period the export of electricity to Ukraine, Belarus, the Caucasus and the Baltic countries will be reduced.

Anatoliy Chubais says Kazakhstan and Russia are close to creating a common electricity market.

**13 October 2006** Kazakh Prime Minister Daniyal Akhmetov has talks with Tatarstan Prime Minister Rustam Minnikhanov. He says the governments of Kazakhstan and Tatarstan are considering the possibility of building a motorway linking Western Europe, Russia, Kazakhstan and China.

**13 October 2006** Finance Minister Andrey Kudrin visits Beijing. He says Russia hopes that China will join the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).

**13 October 2006** Anatoliy Zverev, the commander of the Russian peacekeeping contingent in Transdnestr, says that Russian peacekeepers will remain there until the conflict is settled.

**14 October 2006** The MFA issues a statement urging North Korea to abide by UNSC Resolution 1718.

Vladimir Putin and the Chinese president's envoy, Tang Jiaxuan, discuss the North Korean nuclear problem in Moscow.

Deputy prime minister and defence minister, Sergey Ivanov, says the DPRK's nuclear blast has "provoked unanimous condemnation from the whole of the international community; in normal human language, it is an absolute outrage".

The resolution must be aimed at sending a further signal to the leadership of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that the Korean Peninsula's nuclear problem must be resolved peacefully using political and diplomatic means. Of course, there is no question of using any kind of force. For Russia and China this issue is of paramount importance, because both China and Russia directly border on North Korea.

**15 October 2006** The Russian envoy to the UN, Vitaliy Churkin says:

We expect that the North Korean leadership will weigh and carry out the right analysis of the decision adopted by the UN Security Council today and will respond in a way that would make it possible to return to both talks and normal - in every meaning of the word - relations between the international community and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It is very important that the resolution envisages that in the event North Korea meets the demands contained in the resolution, the Security Council will remove the sanctions adopted in the resolution.

The Russian deputy foreign minister, Aleksandr Alekseyev, says the Democratic People's Republic of Korea does not reject six-party talks and their ultimate goal of denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula.

**16 October 2006** Vladimir Putin and South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun discuss the North Korean nuclear test by telephone.

**16 October 2006** Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces Army Gen Yuriy Baluyevskiy says NATO's readiness to start an intensive dialogue with Georgia has prompted the Georgian authorities to aggravate relations with Russia.

Andrey Kokoshin, chairman of the State Duma committee for CIS and relations with compatriots, says during his visit to the USA that Western states are beginning to assess what is happening in Georgia in a more realistic way.

**16 October 2006** A meeting of the CIS Council of Foreign Ministers takes place in Minsk. The meeting discusses preparation for the forthcoming CIS summit which is scheduled for late November 2006. The most important issue of the meeting was the problem of state borders of the CIS states. Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov says that Russia and Ukraine have reached an agreement to begin demarcation of the borders.

**16 October 2006** A Russia-NATO exercise begins at the Defence Ministry's Central Research and Development Institute in Moscow.

**17 October 2006** Defence Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Sergey Ivanov says that Russia will respond negatively to any second nuclear test by North Korea.

Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov declines to confirm reports that North Korea notified Russia of its nuclear test.

**17 October 2006** The chief of the general staff Yuriy Baluyevskiy visits Japan.

**17 October 2006** Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov visits South Korea.

**17 October 2006** Rosneft and China National Petroleum Corporation sign a protocol on forming the joint venture Vostok Energy Ltd. Vostok Energy's authorized capital has been set at 10m dollars. Rosneft will own a 51-per-cent stake in the venture, CNPC 49 per cent.

**17 October 2006** Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says Russian and NATO troops should be ready to fend off threats in various regions of the world together. "One of the areas of cooperation between Russia and NATO is operational compatibility of the armed forces. This takes place both at the level of Russia's cooperation with NATO as a whole and at the bilateral level." He says

operational compatibility presupposes joint exercises and training. This is done in order to be able, if need be, to fend off common threats and challenges through joint efforts. Whether Russian or NATO troops are to be used in this or that region of the world is another matter.

Chairman of the NATO military committee Gen Raymond Henault says the main goal of the Russia-NATO cooperation is the fight against terrorism.

Portuguese National Defence Minister Nuno Severiano Teixeira visits Moscow for talks with Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov.

**17 October 2006** Russia's envoy to the UN Vitaliy Churkin says Russia has demanded that sanctions against Sukhoi and Rosoboronexport companies be lifted, saying that otherwise it will not be able to vote for sanctions against Iran.

**17 October 2006** President Vladimir Putin and Qatar First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Hamad Bin-Jasim Al Thani discuss the situation in the Middle East at a meeting in the Novo-Ogarevo residence outside Moscow.

**18 October 2006** Sergey Mironov meets the chairman of the Belarusian National Assembly's House of Representatives Uladzimir Kanaplyow in Moscow. He says Belarus and Russia should approach the final approval of the draft constitutional act of the union state. Mironov notes that a joint Russian-Belarusian commission on drafting the constitutional act has practically completed drafting the document.

**18 October 2006** The parliament of Abkhazia appeals to the president of Russia and the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation to recognize the independence of the self-proclaimed republic and "establish associate relations between the Russian Federation and Abkhazia".

The head of the Duma committee for international affairs, Konstantin Kosachev, welcomes the statement issued yesterday by the EU on Russian-Georgian relations.

**18 October 2006** Moldova and Transdnestr have official consultations with Russian, Ukrainian and OSCE mediators in Odessa.

**18 October 2006** Vladimir Putin and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert have talks in Moscow.

**18 October 2006** The MFA says Russia hopes that the DPRK will take a decision to move away from the complicated situation "not through means of nuclear confrontation, but through peaceful talks". This is in response to North Korean's condemnation of UNSC Resolution 1718.

Konstantin Kosachev, chairman of the State Duma committee for international affairs, says: "The emergence of another nuclear state bordering on Russia is a direct threat to Russian security, and Russia is without doubt sincerely and most categorically interested in the cessation of the North Korean nuclear programme".

**18 October 2006** Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Kislyak says Moscow regards as unacceptable the US sanctions against the federal state enterprise Rosoboronexport and the Sukhoi aircraft corporation but Russia's position during the UN Security Council's vote on the Iranian nuclear problem will not be linked with the linking of these sanctions.

**18 October 2006** Sergey Lavrov has talks with Qatari counterpart, Hamad Bin-Jasim Al Thani.

**18 October 2006** A two-day Council of Europe Forum for the Future of Democracy takes place in Moscow. The delegates will discuss the place and role of political parties in the process of building a modern democratic society.

**18 October 2006** A memorandum of cooperation signed by the prosecutor-general's office and that of the Republic of Cyprus will strengthen collaboration between the two countries in fighting crime.

**19 October 2006** Vladimir Putin tells visiting Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert that Russia will not permit weapons supplied to Syria to fall into the hands of a third party.

**19 October 2006** Russia's permanent representative at the UN, Vitaliy Churkin, says that Russia does not welcome the practice of states imposing unilateral sanctions whilst the Security Council is trying to work out common approaches. He refers to US sanctions against North Korea and Iran. He states that as a result of unilateral US sanctions against North Korea and Iran, two Russian enterprises, the Sukhoi aircraft company and the arms exporter Rosoboronexport, had been put on the restrictions list.

**19 October 2006** Presidential advisor Sergey Yastrzhemskiy says that Moscow is not ready to ratify the European energy charter in its current form; more talks with the EU on amending the charter's provisions are needed.

**19 October 2006** Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov sends a congratulatory message to to Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Republic of Korea Ban Ki-moon in connection with the latter's appointment to the post of UN secretary-general.

**19 October 2006** Russian Air Force C-in-C Vladimir Mikhaylov comments on recent CIS air defence exercises. "We have maintained all the command posts which existed across the territory of the Soviet Union. Through the CIS's joint air defence system we are now demonstrating that all the telecommunications links are intact. We are abreast of the entire situation, not only above the territory of Russia, but even further afield than the territory of the former Soviet Union."

**19 October 2006** Chairman of the Federation Council International Affairs Committee Mikhail Margelov criticizes US President George Bush's directive on a "National Space Policy".

**20 October 2006** Vladimir Putin's aide for the EU issues, Sergey Yastrzhembskiy, says that the implementation of the visa-free travel between Russia and the EU should not be postponed indefinitely.

**20 October 2006** Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov announces that Russia is in favour of a nuclear-free status for the Korean Peninsula.

**20 October 2006** The MFA criticises Georgia's ethnic minorities policy as primarily aimed at suppressing any real voice on the part of ethnic minorities.

North Ossetia decides to open a representative office in South Ossetia. The mission will consist of three people and it will be headed by Gerasim Khugayev, who held the post of prime minister of South Ossetia from 1993 to 1995.

The MOD expresses concern over the possibility of Georgian-Ukrainian military-technical cooperation.

**20 October 2006** Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says reports in a number of media that during the Lebanon-Israel conflict the Hezbollah group possessed not just Russian weapons, but also US and even Israeli ones, are "in large measure close to the truth".

**20 October 2006** Russia's UN envoy, Vitaliy Churkin, says Russia is calling on the Middle East Quartet to give diplomatic support to the meeting planned between Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and the head of the Palestinian National Authority, Mahmud Abbas.

Sergey Lavrov has talks with Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert.

The MFA welcomes the Fatah-Hamas accord.

**20 October 2006** The Federation Council expresses regret over the events of 1956 in Hungary but declares that Russia cannot be held responsible for the actions of Soviet leaders.

**20 October 2006** The Belarusian and Russian defence ministries approve a joint action plan for the period until 2009. The plan will be used as a basis for the annual planning of operations of the Belarusian-Russian Regional Group of Forces. The two ministries also adopt a plan of joint information support activities, which provides for the use of state-of-the-art information technologies in the area.

Belarusian Defence Minister Leanid Maltsev says Russia and Belarus will sign an intergovernmental agreement on creating a joint regional air defence system before the end of 2006. The leadership of the Belarusian Defence Ministry has suggested that the Russian and Belarusian defence ministries draw up a joint arms programme for 2007-12.

**20 October 2006** Sergey Lavrov is interviewed by Kuwaiti news agency Kuna. The interview appears on the MFA website on 21 October.

**20 October 2006** Vladimir Putin attends the informal EU summit in Lahti, Finland. They discuss Russia-EU relations. Putin says:

We are not against the principles that the energy charter is based on but we think that certain provisions of the charter need to be defined more precisely or a new document needs to be developed, based on the same principles. Without taking into account the interests of all partners, cooperation cannot have long-term or firm prospects. I have - especially after tonight's meeting - confidence that we shall find these common approaches with our European partners.

**21 October 2006** US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice visits Moscow for talks with Sergey Lavrov. They discuss the North Korean nuclear issue and the implementation of the UN Security Council resolution in connection on the issues of Iran's nuclear programme, the Middle East settlement and the situation in Iraq and the Transcaucasus. Rice also has talks with Vladimir Putin.

**21 October 2006** Vladimir Putin calls on Abkhazia and South Ossetia to build a common state with Georgia. "To our great regret and extreme concern, the situation is developing towards a possibility of bloodshed. Today's Georgian leadership is striving towards restoring its territorial integrity by military means, which it has almost openly declared. Extremely difficult relations have developed between these peoples, and one must muster up patience and meticulously restore confidence towards one another and build a common state. That is what we are calling for and that is what we want."

US Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Fried has talks with Deputy Foreign Minister Grigoriy Karasin in Moscow on Georgia.

**22 October 2006** The Federal Migration Service denies that it is targeting Georgian immigrants in the Russian Federation.

**23 October 2006** Sergey Lavrov meets EU external relations commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner in Moscow. They discuss the Iranian nuclear issue.

**23 October 2006** Sergey Lavrov addresses European businessmen in Moscow. He says Russia doesn't have to join the EU to think of itself as part of Europe. He says: "Our country's energy sector will remain open for cooperation on mutually advantageous terms."

Sergey Lavrov says Russia "is not yet planning to reopen the air link with Georgia."

The chairman of the Duma committee on the CIS and relations with compatriots Andrey Kokoshin criticises Ukraine's readiness to sell arms to Georgia.

**24 October 2006** Sergey Lavrov says he hopes that the DPRK will not carry out a second nuclear test. He says that a splitting of Iraq into several states is "realistic".

**24 October 2006** Sergey Lavrov says that in the drafting of the UN Security Council resolution on Georgia, Russia achieved its objectives.

Deputy Foreign Minister Grigoriy Karasin says that the resumption of Russian-Georgian political contacts on various levels will depend on real steps by Tbilisi to normalize relations with Moscow.

A delegation from Abkhazia visits Moscow. The chairman of the de facto parliament, Nugzar Ashuba, 'MP' Beslan Butba and Sergey Bagapsh's representative in Moscow, Sergey Aghba, are holding meetings. They will meet Sergey Baburin and Andrey Kokoshin. Their talks will be about Abkhazia's associate membership of the Russian Federation.

**24 October 2006** The Russian and Ukrainian prime ministers Mikhail Fradkov and Viktor Yanukovich meet in Kiev for a meeting of the economic cooperation committee. Yanukovich says the price of Russian gas for Ukraine next year will not exceed 130 dollars per 1,000 cubic metres.

**24 October 2006** Deputy Prime Minister Aleksandr Zhukov says he does not rule out the possibility that the talks with the USA on the Russian Federation's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) could be completed before the end of October.

**24 October 2006** The Deputy Chief of the MOD's Main International Military Cooperation Directorate (GUMVS), Lt-Gen Yevgeniy Buzhinskiy, says the Russian-American Torgau military exercise is to be held next year.

**25 October 2006** Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Grushko says Georgia's membership of NATO will seriously affect Russia's interests and have a negative impact on the situation in the problem-ridden regions.

**25 October 2006** The MFA criticises the Ukrainian authorities for banning the head of the Russian Effective Policy Foundation, Gleb Pavlovskiy, from entering Ukraine.

**26 October 2006** Vladimir Putin receives NATO General-Secretary Jaap de Hoop Scheffer in Moscow. Scheffer also has talks with Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov. Ivanov states:

Any family has some kinds of disagreements. We, too, have some points of view which do not coincide on a number of problems. These are issues of expanding NATO's military infrastructure towards the borders of the Russian Federation. I mean first of all Bulgaria, Romania and the Baltic states. There is an issue which at present formally may not be on the agenda of NATO as an organization but we cannot help being concerned. This regards plans of the USA, a NATO member, to deploy the third positioning area of its global missile defence system in Eastern Europe.

The problem of relations between Georgia and its former autonomous parts - Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Judging by all symptoms, we feel this and we see this, the leadership of Georgia may favour the use of forces in settling the conflict, and, naturally, this will lead to unpredictable consequences for the lives and security of people, of the small ethnic groups which live in Georgia, very small peoples. These conflicts should be settled by a peaceful diplomatic way, and Russia has nothing to do with this.

He says the process of transformation of NATO will require an adjustment to Russian military policy.

**26 October 2006** The MFA says a new outburst of "confrontational rhetoric" from Georgia bears witness to the fact that the course chosen by Georgia's current leadership towards the use of force to resolve conflicts is unalterable. This is in response to the latest statements by the Georgian foreign policy department and Georgian officials about the "provocative shelling" of the village of Azhara (upper part of Kodori Gorge).

Russian peacekeepers in the Kodori gorge state that they have heard no firing. The UN mission of observers in Georgia start an investigation into the firing at the car of Georgian Interior Minister Vano Merabishvili in the upper part of the Kodori gorge, which took place on 25 October.

Vladimir Putin signs a law "On the ratification of the agreement between the Russian Federation and Georgia on organizing the transit of military cargo and personnel through the territory of Georgia". The agreement was signed on 31 March 2006 in Sochi. It is aimed at international legal regulation of issues concerning the transit by various means of transport through the territory of Georgia of military cargo and personnel in order to ensure the functioning of the Russian military base in Armenia.

Chairman of the Duma Committee for CIS Affairs and Relations with Compatriots Andrey Kokoshin says Tbilisi's policy on Abkhazia pushed Sukhumi into asking Russia to recognize the republic's independence. He says "the State Duma is looking extremely closely at the appeal from the parliament of Abkhazia".

The Duma defence committee deputy chairman, Mikhail Babich, says Russia has the right to take appropriate measures if NATO pursues objectives that contradict Russia's interests, such as placing anti-missile systems in Eastern Europe or Georgia's accession.

**26 October 2006** Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov discusses trade relations with his Kazakh counterpart, Daniyal Akhmetov in Moscow.

Minister of Trade and Economic Development German Gref says that within a month, Russia and Kazakhstan will take a decision on the project of building a high-speed main road that will link China with Europe. He has discussed this with Kazakh Prime Minister Daniyal Akhmetov.

**26 October 2006** Sergey Ivanov says the EU troika's draft resolution on Iran does not correspond to the earlier agreed position of the 'six' (Russia, USA, China, France, Germany and Britain). "Our aim will be to eliminate the risks of sensitive technologies ending up in Iran until such time as the International Atomic Energy Agency clarifies issues of interest to it, and to retain all necessary channels of communication with Iran. And it seems to me that in this respect the present draft resolution manifestly fails to meet the objectives agreed by the six parties earlier." He says Russia is studying the draft UNSC produced by the EU Troika.

Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Kislyak says the EU troika draft UNSC resolution contains many problem areas.

**27 October 2006** The MFA criticises the British Foreign Office human rights report.

**27 October 2006** Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says he is not worried that Iran can produce "weapons-grade" uranium.

**27 October 2006** Russia's permanent representative at the OSCE Aleksey Borodavkin says Tbilisi is "purposefully preparing to use force in the context of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict".

Georgian parliament speaker Nino Burjanadze says Russia has begun building a gas pipeline 30km from Vladikavkaz which will extend to South Ossetia. She says that the Georgian government would not permit illegal construction on its territory.

**27 October 2006** Ukgazenergo begins to import Russian oil to Ukraine.

**27 October 2006** Belarusian Prime Minister Syarhey Sidorski says he does not rule out that Belarus might look for alternative routes for energy supplies bypassing Russia.

**27 October 2006** Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov addresses a session of the Africa Partnership Forum.

**27 October 2006** Defence minister Sergey Ivanov addresses the Federation Council on Russian peacekeeping. He states: "In principle, active participation in the

peacekeeping process brings profit to the state. The amount of compensation paid to Russia for the participation of our military contingent in the operation to maintain peace in former Yugoslavia and in the UN mission in Angola in 1992-1998 brought 93m dollars to our state budget." He says Russian involvement in peacekeeping strengthens Russia's prestige in the international arena.

The Russian battalion in Lebanon completes its first bridge.

**27 October 2006** Argentine defence minister Nilda Garre visits Moscow for talks with Sergey Ivanov. Argentina will obtain from Russia a list of types of armaments and military hardware for subsequent purchase in the country.

**28 October 2006** The parliament of North Ossetia adopts an appeal to the Duma about the genocide of the Ossetian people by the military-political leadership of Georgia.

**28 October 2006** The foreign ministers of Russia and Saudi Arabia, Sergey Lavrov and Sa'ud al-Faysal Al Sa'ud, speak by telephone. They discuss Lebanon and Syria.

**30 October 2006** The Moscow Energy Dialogue meets in Moscow. The main topic on the agenda is energy security and practical implementation of the documents signed at the July G8 summit in St Petersburg. The development of oil and gas and coal industries, as well as the electric power and atomic sectors, will also be discussed.

**30 October 2006** The head of North Ossetia, Taymuraz Mamsurov, the president of South Ossetia, Eduard Kokoyty, and representatives of the republics' security departments meet in Vladikavkaz to discuss issues of strengthening security in the zone of the Russian-Georgian border.

**30 October 2006** Vladimir Putin has a telephone conversation with Iranian President Mahmud Ahmadinezhad.

**30 October 2006** Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov meets General Peter Pace, chairman of the US Committee of Joint Chiefs of Staff. A military cooperation plan for 2007 is signed in Moscow by Russian CGS Yuriy Baluyevskiy and his US opposite number, Gen Peter Pace.

**30 October 2006** Konstantin Kosachev, the head of the Duma Foreign Affairs Committee, says the recognition of Kosovo's independence by the international community without Serbia's consent will "set a precedent" that will have "undoubted significance" for determining the status of disputed territories in Europe and in the former Soviet Union.

**30 October 2006** The MFA says Russia and Ukraine agreed "to step up their dialogue on overcoming the remaining differences concerning the presence of the Russian Black Sea Fleet on Ukrainian territory".

**30 October 2006** The Prosecutor-General's Office has demanded from its colleagues in Kyrgyzstan an explanation in connection with the visit to the capital of Kyrgyzstan this summer of businessman Boris Berezovskiy, who is on the international wanted list and asked them to take measures to detain him in the event of him appearing in the country.

- 30 October 2006** Armenian President Robert Kocharyan visits Moscow for talks with Vladimir Putin.
- 30 October 2006** Indian Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas Murli Deora visits Moscow. He says New Delhi "welcomes the participation of Russia in the construction of the Iran-Pakistan-India oil pipeline".
- 31 October 2006** Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Alekseyev says Russia takes an extremely positive view of the adoption of a statement on the results of the trilateral meeting in Beijing by delegations from China, North Korea and the USA on an early resumption of the six-party talks.
- 31 October 2006** Iran's ambassador to Russia, Gholamreza Ansari, says Iran "expresses its readiness to put its relevant installations and technologies under IAEA control, and is also ready to sign an additional protocol if Iran's nuclear dossier is returned to the IAEA".
- 31 October 2006** Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Kislyak attends the Global Initiative To Combat Nuclear Terrorism in Rabat. Kislyak is co-chairing the Initiative with US Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Robert Joseph.
- 31 October 2006** The MFA "welcomes the successful result of the referendum on the Serbian constitution on 28-29 October, in which the majority of citizens confirmed the decision of the parliament of that country to adopt a new basic law of the state".
- 31 October 2006** Security Council Secretary Igor Ivanov says that Russia recognising South Ossetia is not currently on the agenda.
- 31 October 2006** Angolan President Jose Eduardo dos Santos visits Moscow. Russia and Angola sign agreements on joint oil and gas prospecting and on military cooperation.
- 31 October 2006** Sergey Kiriyyenko, the head of Rosatom, says Atomstroyeksport has won the tender for the construction of the Belene nuclear power plant in Bulgaria.
- 31 October 2006** Aleksandr Denisov, first deputy director of the Federal Service for Military-Technical Cooperation, says the plan for the export of Russian arms and military hardware abroad will be fulfilled or even overfulfilled.
- 31 October 2006** An official military delegation of the Northern Army of Japan's Ground Self-Defence Force visits the command of the Far Eastern Military District in Khabarovsk.
- 31 October 2006** Economic Development and Trade Minister German Gref says Russia and the USA have not yet managed to complete bilateral talks on the WTO and intend to continue holding the discussions.
- 31 October 2006** Sergey Ivanov visits Sweden.

### **November**

**1 November 2006** The foreign ministers of Armenia and Russia, Vardan Oskanyan and Sergey Lavrov, discuss bilateral cooperation and regional issues in Moscow.

**1 November 2006** Vladimir Putin addresses participants in the fifteenth session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC). The address was read by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. Lavrov says Russia's position on Kosovo "has not changed from the moment the settlement process began after the war in Yugoslavia."

Putin refuses to meet the Georgian foreign minister Gela Bezhushvili. Bezhushvili has arrived in Moscow to take part in the meeting of foreign ministers of the countries of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization.

**1 November 2006** Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says Russia is against any use of force to settle the Abkhaz and South Ossetian conflicts.

Sergey Ivanov visits Norway.

Sergey Ivanov says Russia is resolutely against any military nuclear programme by Iran and is even against Iran conducting research in this sphere. He says: "We do not want to have one more nuclear state at our southern borders."

Ivanov says a settlement in Afghanistan is in the fundamental security interests of Russia. "It is in our interests to provide assistance to the international forces seeking to stabilize Afghanistan (ISAF). We are providing this help and will continue to do so." He says Russia will not send troops to Afghanistan.

**1 November 2006** The newly-elected UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon visits Moscow for talks with Vladimir Putin. He becomes UN Secretary General in January 2007. He is still South Korean foreign minister.

**1 November 2006** The MFA expresses concern over the further worsening of the situation in Palestine and urges the Israelis and Palestinians to show restraint and resume a direct dialogue.

**2 November 2006** Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak visits Russia for talks with Vladimir Putin. Putin proposes that Cairo should be invited to join the Quartet of Mideast mediators which includes the USA, Russia, the EU and the UN.

**2 November 2006** Gazprom confirms that it has suggested raising the price of Russian gas for Georgia by more than 100 per cent. Gazprom has offered to Georgia to buy Russian gas at 230 dollars for 1,000 cubic metres.

The commander the troops of the North Caucasian Military District, Gen Aleksandr Baranov, says by the end of 2006 the Russian military will leave Tbilisi.

**2 November 2006** Russian Chief of General Staff Yuriy Baluyevskiy says Iran will not have ICBMs for a long time to come. Iran has just tested its new Shahab missiles.

**2 November 2006** Air force commander in chief General Vladimir Mikhaylov says there is a considerable increase in security threats to Russia, including from NATO countries.

**2 November 2006** The chairman of the Duma International Relations Committee, Konstantin Kosachev, says that all prerequisites exist for good relations between Russia and the European Union, but the EU does not treat Russia as an equal. He says: "for us, membership of the EU would substantially limit our opportunities for an active foreign policy and an active economic policy in other areas, primarily Asia. The EU keeps making a big mistake in trying to talk to Russia as if it were a candidate for entry."

**3 November 2006** The State Oil Company of the Azerbaijani Republic (SOCAR) and the Russian company RussNeft sign a production sharing agreement on the joint development of the Azerbaijani onshore deposit Hovsan-Zig. Under the contract, SOCAR will have 25 per cent and RussNeft 75 per cent of the shares.

**3 November 2006** Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov attends a meeting of the Russia-EU partnership council in Brussels. He says as regards Iran, Russia remains prepared to work on gradual measures proportional to the actual situation concerning the Iranian nuclear programme.

**3 November 2006** Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Kislyak says Russia will not support the submission of the draft UN Security Council resolution on Iran drawn up by the European "troika" (France, Germany and Britain) in its present form.

**3 November 2006** Sergey Lavrov says that the Kyrgyz opposition should act within a legal framework.

**3 November 2006** Army Gen Yuriy Baluyevskiy, chief of the General Staff of the armed forces, says a joint combined operational-tactical-level exercise by the Collective Security Treaty Organization and Shanghai Cooperation Organization will be held on Russian territory in 2007.

**4 November 2006** Sergey Lavrov says Russia expects that a concrete agreement will be reached and that six-party talks on the North Korean nuclear problem will resume before the end of 2006.

**4 November 2006** Sergey Lavrov says Russia will agree to the UN Security Council's draft resolution on Iran, provided that the proposed measures will last for "a limited period of time." Moscow supports the resumption of talks with Tehran on the Iranian nuclear issue conducted by the international group of six (five permanent UN Security Council members and Germany). He says Russia will continue working on the Bushehr project.

**5 November 2006** The MFA says that the trial of former Iraqi President Saddam Husayn is a domestic affair of Iraq and warns against politicizing the issue.

The chairman of the Duma international affairs committee, Konstantin Kosachev, says the death sentence on Saddam Husayn is unlikely to be carried out. If it is, it will have catastrophic consequences for Iraq, up to the destruction of the Iraqi state.

**6 November 2006** The MFA welcomes an agreement reached by Hamas and Fatah in Palestine.

**6 November 2006** Sergey Lavrov and Condoleezza Rice discuss issues related to the Iranian nuclear programme.

**6 November 2006** Deputy Prime Minister Aleksandr Zhukov says Russia has an interest in North Korea becoming a nuclear-free zone.

**6 November 2006** Vladimir Putin and Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi discuss topical issues of bilateral cooperation over the telephone.

**7 November 2006** The MFA calls for a dialogue between government and opposition in Kyrgyzstan.

**7 November 2006** Vladimir Putin meets Slovak President Ivan Gasparovic in Moscow. They discuss energy cooperation.

**7 November 2006** Sergey Lavrov has talks with his Croatian counterpart, Kolinda Grabar Kitarovic, in Moscow.

**7 November 2006** The deputy chairman of the Gazprom board, Aleksandr Medvedev, says that none of the company's agreements to supply gas to CIS countries are based on "political motives". He says that if Georgia failed to sign a contract with Gazprom on supplies for 2007 then supplies would be stopped. Medvedev also says Gazprom intends to restart talks with Shell, Mitsui and Mitsubishi on joining the Sakhalin-2 project.

**8 November 2006** Azerbaijani President Il'ham Aliev leaves for Moscow at the invitation of Vladimir Putin.

**8 November 2006** Georgian prime minister Zurab Noghaideli says the Georgian government will not allow Russia to blackmail it over gas prices.

The presidential Council for Assisting Civil Society Institutions and Human Rights, which is headed by Ella Pamfilova, urges an end to the anti-Georgian campaign which was launched in a number of regions in the country.

**8 November 2006** Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Kislyak says the Russian amendments to the draft UN Security Council resolution on Iran are aimed at continuing talks with Iran.

**8 November 2006** The MFA expresses concern over the Israeli military action in Gaza.

**8 November 2006** North Korean First Deputy Foreign Minister Kang Sok-ju arrives in Moscow from Beijing for talks.

**8 November 2006** The MFA says trade turnover between Russia and China will "exceed the 30 billion-dollar mark" in 2006.

**9 November 2006** The head of the Federation Council's Committee on International Affairs Mikhail Margelov says:

The strongest country in today's world, the USA, is not coping with its role of the main and only pole which all the world political forces are drawn to and which all the world political forces are driven by. Obviously, the Americans, first and foremost the Republicans, have failed to create an incubator for democracy in Afghanistan, have failed to create an incubator for democracy in Iraq. It is clear that the Americans are failing in their forceful imposition of democracy in the Middle East.

**9 November 2006** Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov has talks with Chinese State Council Premier Wen Jiabao on economic cooperation in Beijing. Over 10 documents have been signed as a result of the 11th Russian-Chinese intergovernment meeting.

Rosneft head Sergey Bogdanchikov tells the third Russian-Chinese investment forum that Rosneft is ready to fill the Phase One pipe of the Eastern Siberia to Pacific Ocean (ESPO) pipeline in 2008.

**9 November 2006** Sergey Lavrov and Bahraini foreign minister Khalid Bin-Ahmad Al Khalifah have talks in Moscow.

**9 November 2006** Sergey Lavrov says in relation to South Ossetia and Abkhazia, that: "It is hard to say how events will evolve in the future. But a great deal will depend on the West's conduct in the issue of Kosovo's independence."

**9 November 2006** Sergey Lavrov says that road map contains all components necessary to begin the process of settlement in the Middle East.

**9 November 2006** An international Conference of European Ministers of Justice takes place in Moscow. Presidential aide Viktor Ivanov says at the opening that Russia thinks it expedient to draft a comprehensive convention on the fight against terrorism.

**9 November 2006** Defence Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Sergey Ivanov says Russia has no intention of giving up the South Kuril islands to Japan.

**9 November 2006** The Moldovan breakaway Transdnester region opens its information and cultural centre in Moscow.

**9 November 2006** Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Saltanov calls for an end to violence in the Gaza strip.

**10 November 2006** Chairman of the Iranian Supreme National Security Council Ali Larijani visits Moscow. He has talks with Sergey Lavrov and secretary of the Security Council Igor Ivanov.

**10 November 2006** Konstantin Totskiy, permanent representative of the Russian Federation with NATO, says Russia does have serious concerns in relation to Georgia's possible accession to NATO.

The commander-in-chief of the Russian air force, Army General Vladimir Mikhaylov, says the Russian leadership is alarmed about the process of NATO enlargement to the borders of the Russian Federation.

**10 November 2006** The MFA defends the South Ossetian independence referendum on 12 November.

**10 November 2006** Vladimir Putin has talks in Moscow with Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenko.

**10 November 2006** Aleksandr Ryazanov, deputy chairman of Gazprom has talks with Tajik President Emomali Rahmonov.

**10 November 2006** Economic Development and Trade Minister German Gref says Russia and the USA have completed bilateral negotiations on Russia joining the WTO; to complete the multilateral talks will take six months.

**13 November 2006** The MFA expresses concern over the situation on Lebanon, following the resignation of five ministers representing the Shi'i community on 11 November.

**13 November 2006** The MFA welcomes the outcome of the South Ossetian referendum on independence.

The first deputy chairman of the Committee on the Commonwealth of Independent States and Relations with Compatriots, Akhmed Bilalov, warns Georgia against using force in its dispute with South Ossetia following the referendum there. The 12 November referendum showed a strong majority in favour of independence.

**13 November 2006** Konstantin Kosachev, chairman of the Duma international affairs committee, accuses Poland of pursuing "narrow national problems" after the latter blocked talks between the European Union and Russia on a new cooperation agreement. Kosachev's sentiment is shared by the presidential aide in charge of EU ties, Sergey Yastrzhembskiy.

**14 November 2006** Sergey Lavrov warns that in the Council of Europe there are visible trends towards creating a "European Union law" within the council and attempts to fence oneself off from other members of the council.

**14 November 2006** The MFA says that Moscow is perplexed by Poland's blocking approval by the EU foreign ministers of a new mandate for talks with Russia on a new agreement on strategic cooperation. Poland blocked the start of the talks on the new agreement, trying to get Russia to ratify the Energy Charter and lift restrictions on import of food from Poland.

**14 November 2006** Sergey Lavrov says that every action taken by the Georgian leadership during the past three years has been aimed at thwarting the existing mechanisms of settlement of regional conflicts. He says:

The way the Georgian leadership has been acting over the past two to three years - rejection of all the signed agreements; refusal to meet its own obligations and to sit down at the negotiating table together with the South Ossetian leadership in order to draw up a joint settlement plan; refusal to sign a document proposed by the OSCE on nonuse of force and solely peaceful methods of solving all problems in South Ossetia; constant acts of provocation carried out in the conflict zone against Russian peacekeepers - all of these unilateral actions have been aimed at thwarting the existing negotiating formats and peacekeeping mechanisms.

**14 November 2006** Kremlin sources state that Russia is not planning to set up a gas supercartel in order to blackmail consumers of Russian fuels.

**15 November 2006** The Duma proposes a draft statement condemning an Estonian parliament bill which could lead to the removal of Soviet-era war monuments.

**15 November 2006** US President George Bush arrives at Moscow's Vnukovo-2 airport where he will hold a short meeting with Vladimir Putin. Bush is en route to the APEC summit.

**15 November 2006** Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Grushko says Russia's European partners are admitting their inability to separate strategic issues from technical ones in relation to the negotiation process on a new framework agreement between the Russian Federation and the EU.

**15 November 2006** A meeting takes place in Moscow between Grigoriy Karasin, state secretary and deputy foreign minister, and Jean Arnault, the UN secretary-general's special representative for Georgia. Russia and the United Nations Organization believe it is essential that Georgia should fulfil the UN Security Council resolution on a Georgian-Abkhaz settlement.

**16 November 2006** First Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Denisov attends an informal APEC meeting in Hanoi. Ministers and other representatives of a number of Asia-Pacific countries attending a working breakfast in Hanoi voice their full support for a resumption of the six-party talks on settling the Korean peninsula nuclear problem.

**16 November 2006** Sergey Lavrov visits Pakistan. He calls for a meeting of the Quartet on the Middle East.

Sergey Lavrov visits India.

**16 November 2006** Russian forces begin withdrawing from Tbilisi.

The leaders of Georgia's breakaway Abkhazia and South Ossetia and Moldova's separatist Transdnestr, respectively Sergey Bagapsh, Eduard Kokoyty and Igor Smirnov, appear on Russian TV and call for independence for their regions.

The parliament of North Ossetia appeals to the leadership of the Russian Federation to recognize South Ossetia's independence.

**17 November 2006** The MFA says Russia is angered by the anti-Russian rhetoric of the Georgian leadership. This is in response to a statement made by Georgian Minister of State for Euro-Atlantic Integration Giorgi Baramidze, who has accused Russia of carrying out ethnic cleansing, similar to the persecution of the Jews in Nazi Germany.

**17 November 2006** Grigoriy Karasin, state secretary and deputy foreign minister, and Eduard Kokoyty, president of South Ossetia meet in Moscow and discuss relations with Georgia.

The leaders of Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Transdnestr hold a joint news conference in Moscow. They ask to join the Russian Federation.

**17 November 2006** Sergey Lavrov says Russia is against the UN Security Council substituting for the IAEA in resolving the Iranian nuclear problem.

**17 November 2006** The MFA expresses concern over the situation in Iraq.

**17 November 2006** Deputy Prime Minister Aleksandr Zhukov says that Russia will be acceding to the WTO on terms that benefit all sectors of its economy.

**17 November 2006** The chief of the General Staff, Army Gen Yuriy Baluyevskiy, visits Finland. He says that the Russian Navy could be involved in ensuring the safety of the North European Gas Pipeline, to be laid on the Baltic seabed.

**18 November 2006** Former presidential envoy in the Far Eastern Federal District Konstantin Pulikovskiy says that North Korea has expressed readiness to resume participation in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and a desire to continue the six-party talks on the nuclear problem on the Korean peninsula. Pulikovskiy recently met North Korea's new ambassador in Moscow, Kim Yong-jae, in his capacity as co-chairman of the intergovernmental commission on economic and scientific and technical cooperation between the two countries.

The foreign ministers of Russia and the Republic of Korea discuss the North Korean issue at the APEC summit in Hanoi.

**18 November 2006** Sergey Lavrov is interviewed on Vesti TV. He backs the South Ossetian referendum, the expected resumption of six-party talks on the North Korean nuclear problem, and denies that Russia had made any concessions on Iran in exchange for progress on its WTO entry, and says Moscow wanted to settle the recent trade conflict with Poland without EU involvement.

**18 November 2006** Vladimir Putin says Russia is ready to continue dialogue with Japan on a peace treaty and look for acceptable solutions.

Chairman of the Duma international affairs committee Konstantin Kosachev says compromise in the territorial dispute between Moscow and Tokyo about who the Kuril Islands belong to can be achieved only on the basis of development of bilateral relations and support by public opinion in both countries. Kosachev says:

The Russian Federation's starting position has been and remains that the four islands in question are the territory of the Russian Federation and legally belong to the Russian Federation...if any compromise is possible it will be possible not on the basis of admitting the rightfulness of the Japanese claims to these islands and not in the sense that one, two or some other number of islands could be given back, but hypothetically in a sense that part of some territory could be handed over as stipulated in the 1956 Declaration, on the basis of good will, proceeding from the interests of developing bilateral relations and, it goes without saying, only after the signing of a peace treaty and not vice versa...If the Japanese side agrees to sign a peace treaty without preconditions of any kind, as stipulated by the 1956 Declaration, we will be able to act on the basis of the declaration and move forward, but not before that.

**19 November 2006** Vladimir Putin and George Bush meet at the APEC summit in Hanoi. They discuss means of reinforcing the non-proliferation regime, plus North Korea. Putin says during his meeting that the period of work on the agreement on Russian accession to the WTO was finished and that it had been difficult and prolonged. Russia signs a bilateral protocol on entry into the WTO with the USA. Minister of Economic Development and Trade German Gref states:

It is a very significant event for Russia's integration into the global economy. We agreed on a fairly substantial reduction in duties on medicines and medical equipment, ready-to-wear clothes and footwear, electronics and computer equipment. We agreed the conditions for the gradual liberalization

of the vehicle sector. We also agreed the conditions for a gradual reduction in the rates of duty on aviation equipment.

Gref says that he expects a surge in investment in the Russian economy after Russia joins the WTO. Gref expresses the hope that Georgia will not block Russia's accession to the WTO.

**19 November 2006** The US authorities have lifted sanctions on the Russian aircraft manufacturing company Sukhoi after carrying out appropriate investigations. The company had been accused of violating the American law on nonproliferation with regard to Iran.

The Russian titanium producer VSPMO-Avisma concludes a 30-year contract with Boeing worth 17 billion dollars.

**20 November 2006** The Evraz Group will buy the US company Oregon Steel Mills.

**20 November 2006** Vladimir Putin begins his official visit to Vietnam following the APEC summit. They discuss energy cooperation. Gazprom signs an agreement to develop Vietnam's gas deposits.

**20 November 2006** The former chief spy of the Soviet intelligence services in Great Britain, Oleg Gordiyevskiy, says that Aleksandr Litvinenko was poisoned on the Kremlin's orders.

The SVR denies allegations about its possible involvement in the poisoning.

**20 November 2006** Finance Minister Aleksey Kudrin attends a meeting of G20 finance ministers in Melbourne. He says the Russian government is planning to dramatically raise its international aid. Russia already provides some 100m dollars of aid annually even without its forgiveness of Soviet-era debts. Russia may increase its official international development aid to 400-500m dollars per year.

**21 November 2006** Georgian Parliament Speaker Nino Burjanadze says Georgia cannot allow Russia to join the WTO at the expense of its national interests and in violation of international principles. Georgia is demanding that Georgian customs checkpoints be set up on the border between Russia and Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

**21 November 2006** CIS Executive Secretary Vladimir Rushaylo visits Armenia.

Armenian President Robert Kocharyan meets the Russian and French co-chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group on Nagornyy Karabakh in Yerevan.

**21 November 2006** The MFA condemns the murder in Lebanon of Industry Minister Pierre al-Jumayyil.

The MFA welcomes the restoration of diplomatic relations between Iraq and Syria.

**21 November 2006** Sergey Lavrov says Russia is "opposed to the work of any country to develop peaceful nuclear energy turning into work to transform a peaceful programme into a military one". He says "we want all those 'blank spots' that the IAEA found in Iran's nuclear programme to be explained."

**22 November 2006** Kremlin aide Sergey Yastrzhembskiy says Russia will not dramatize the Polish veto on a new EU mandate for talks on a new fundamental

agreement on strategic partnership with Russia. He says the veto is a "Polish demarche" which "is above all an internal problem for the European Community".

Sergey Lavrov says Russia is not going to ratify the EU energy charter.

**22 November 2006** Vladimir Putin visits Finland. He has talks with Finnish President Tarja Halonen in Helsinki.

**22 November 2006** Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has talks with Greek Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyianni. He says Russia and Greece have agreed to start working on a joint plan of action for 2007-08.

**22 November 2006** The air force C-in-C, Army Gen Vladimir Mikhaylov, says Russia may invite European states to take part in the creation of a joint missile defence "shield" (EuroABM) and to play an active role in its formation. He says:

In view of the irreversibility of missile development processes in the countries of the Near and Middle East, South Asia and the Asia-Pacific region, I think it would be advantageous for Russia to take part in collective measures to ensure the security of the European continent, including its defence against ballistic missiles.

[This interest] is explained first and foremost by Russia's military-geographic position - the need to protect its European territory and the possibility of using individual national systems of defence against ballistic missiles on behalf of neighbouring European countries, by the relative simplicity of moving certain systems to the territory of these countries, and also by the possibility of selling them modern air defence and missile defence systems. Unlike the American equivalent, the zones of responsibility of our early warning system's radar network include the main trajectories of possible missile attack from the Near and Middle East, as well as South Asia, providing radar cover for most European countries. An analysis of the possibilities and characteristics of the Russian Federation's strategic missile defence system, as well as Russia's achievements in developing air defence missile batteries and systems which can hit ballistic missiles of all classes, makes it possible to imagine, conceptually, the possibility of developing a European missile defence system based on Russian weapons.

**23 November 2006** Vladimir Putin attends the Russia-EU summit in Finland.

Deputy Industry and Energy Minister Andrey Dement'yev says cooperation between Russia and the European Union is being politicized by European countries, particularly new EU members, and not by Russia.

**23 November 2006** Duma deputy Konstantin Kosachev says that Poland's policy towards Russia has no prospects for the future.

**23 November 2006** The heads of the military departments of CIS and CSTO countries arrive in Belarus for a meeting of the council of defence ministers. Sergey Ivanov says: "To date agreement procedures are being completed inside departments and inside Russia - I have in mind already at the level of the government and the president of the Russian Federation - and I have no doubts at all that an agreement on the creation of a unified air defence system within the framework of Russia and Belarus will be signed by the end of 2006."

Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says that a joint exercise of air-defence units of CIS countries will take place at the Ashuluk training range in 2007. It will be called Combat Commonwealth-2007.

**23 November 2006** The Russian ambassador at international organizations in Vienna, Grigoriy Berdennikov, says Russia is "against attempts to 'punish' or isolate Iran". He is speaking at the newly-opened session of the IAEA Board of Governors.

**23 November 2006** Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Grushko says Moscow hopes that the development of military capability and the build-up of military might in NATO will be carried out with full observance of the standards of international law.

**23 November 2006** Duma Deputy Chairman Vladimir Pekhtin visits Venezuela. He says Venezuela is a strategic partner for Russia in South America.

**24 November 2006** The chief of the headquarters of the Azuri State Border Service, Arzu Xalilov, and the chief of the Regional Border Department of South Region of Federal Border Service of the Russian Federation, Nikolay Lisinski, sign a cooperation protocol for 2007.

**24 November 2006** Former FSB officer Aleksandr Litvinenko dies in London.

Vladimir Putin dismisses Litvinenko's accusations that Russian special services were behind the attack on him.

Russian presidential adviser Sergey Yastrzhembskiy says that the peculiar coincidence in time of the death of well-known people and significant events involving Vladimir Putin is a result of a well-rehearsed plan to discredit Russia.

**24 November 2006** Vladimir Putin attends the Russia-EU summit in Helsinki. He says the ban on Polish meat is a technical not a political issue.

**24 November 2006** It is reported that Russia has begun delivering Tor-M1 air defence missile systems to Iran under an previously signed contract. This is denied by Rosoboronseksport.

**24 November 2006** The Russian president's special representative for international cooperation on combating terrorism and international crime, Anatoliy Safonov, warns that Iraq could fall apart.

**25 November 2006** The Duma ratifies an international agreement on cooperation in creating special systems for monitoring and observing nuclear tests in Russia. The agreement was concluded between the Russian government and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization in Vienna on 22 March 2005.

**26 November 2006** Russia's PACE delegation says it will back the idea of holding a round-table discussion on the situation in Chechnya under certain conditions.

**26 November 2006** It is reported that Arab mercenary Abu-Khavs was eliminated in Dagestan. He is said to be in the hierarchy of the Al-Qa'idah terrorist network.

**26 November 2006** The MFA calls on Israel and the Palestinians to adhere to their cease-fire agreement and to "maintain the fragile peace" in the region.

Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Saltanov visits Syria. He has talks on Lebanon.

**27 November 2006** PACE representatives visit Chechnya. They conclude that the situation in Chechnya is improving.

**27 November 2006** Sergey Ivanov is interviewed in *Der Spiegel*. He defends arms sales to Iran.

**27 November 2006** The chairman of the Federation Council international affairs committee, Mikhail Margelov, says an international conference should be convened devoted to problems of Iraq.

**27 November 2006** Federation Council Chairman Sergey Mironov attends an international interparliamentary conference devoted to energy security in Brussels.

**28 November 2006** The Prosecutor-General's Office says it is ready to assist Scotland Yard in the investigation into the death in London of former Russian security agent Aleksandr Litvinenko.

**28 November 2006** More than 90 persons who had been forcefully displaced from Chechnya during the combat actions and were living in the Pankisi Gorge of Georgia's Akhmetskiy District for the past several years, return to Georgia. The first groups of Chechen displaced persons came to Georgia in the late 1990s. In 2001, there were 6,000 Chechen refugees in Georgia, 98 per cent of them living in the Pankisi Gorge of Akhmetskiy District. More than 500 displaced persons from Chechnya have voluntarily returned to their native land from Georgia in the past three years by road and air, with assistance from the Russian authorities. About 2,000 people returned to Chechnya on their own. Several thousand people left Georgia for Turkey and European countries in the past few years.

**28 November 2006** CIS heads of state summit takes place in Minsk.

**28 November 2006** Vladimir Putin states that Moscow and Minsk have agreed to set up a joint venture between Gazprom and Beltransgaz on a parity basis.

**28 November 2006** Vladimir Putin states that he and Vladimir Voronin have achieved significant progress on the issue of the export to Russia of Moldovan agricultural produce, in particular wine and meat, as well as on energy and political talks.

**28 November 2006** Rosatom head Sergey Kiriyenko says that Russia's offer to create a uranium-enrichment facility for Iran on Russian territory remains in force. He says the nuclear power station in Bushehr poses no threat to the nonproliferation regime.

**28 November 2006** Former presidential envoy in the Far East Konstantin Pulikovskiy says North Korea's debt to Russia has exceeded 8 billion dollars. Pulikovskiy heads on the Russian side the intergovernmental commissions on economic cooperation with the DPRK and the Republic of Korea.

**28 November 2006** Minister of Agriculture Aleksey Gordeyev says

As soon as Russia becomes a member of the WTO, this organization will develop serious problems...we will raise serious issue with the level of support for agriculture in the European Union and Canada, with the unfair

gains of foreign producers on our market, with the imposition of liberal theories and also with the fact that Western counterparts are forcing us to act as if in a democratic way but in reality against the interests of Russian producers.

**28 November 2006** Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov believes that the deployment in Eastern Europe near the borders of the Union State of the American antimissile defence system is an attempt to destabilize the Russian deterrent potential. He is interviewed in *Soyuznoye Gosudarstvo*.

Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says there is no need to for NATO to establish a military infrastructure in the Baltic states. He says Russia has no plans to join NATO.

The head of the Duma's committee on international affairs, Konstantin Kosachev, considers it unacceptable for the NATO summit, which is taking place in Riga, to discuss Russia's energy policy.

**28 November 2006** Sergey Ivanov says Russia should have nuclear forces capable of inflicting irreparable damage on a potential aggressor. "We have always had nuclear weapons and we will always have them, but Russia should not be striving to maintain the number of nuclear warheads on a par with other nuclear states."

Ivanov says Russia cannot prevent NATO expansion.

**28 November 2006** Federation Council chairman Sergey Mironov says Russia is "quietly negative" about the idea of NATO expanding in any direction, including the accession of new countries to the alliance. He says "when NATO fighters patrol the border with Russia, particularly when it is very small and winding, as is the case between Russia and the Baltic republics", this "does alarm us".

**29 November 2006** The Global Forum for Partnership Between States and Businesses to Counter Terrorism takes place in Moscow. Sergey Lavrov attends.

**29 November 2006** Sergey Lavrov states: "I do not think that attempts to discuss energy security in any format without the participation of Russia will be productive and will improve energy security...I cannot dictate to NATO what they should be dealing with, but energy security issues affect everyone. These should be discussed taking into account the interests and approaches of all the key players."

**29 November 2006** Anatoliy Safonov, special representative of the Russian president for combating terrorism, says that NATO's operation in Afghanistan is not effective and warns the international coalition against flirting with the Taleban.

**29 November 2006** It is reported that former prime minister Yegor Gaidar fell ill in Ireland. Poisoning is suspected by his daughter Mariya Gaidar.

Member of the Duma security committee, Gennadiy Gudkov, says some forces are using the illness of Yegor Gaydar to discredit the Russian leadership.

**29 November 2006** The presidents of Georgia (Mikheil Saakashvili) and Russia (Vladimir Putin) meet in Belarus after the CIS summit.

**29 November 2006** The Estonian ambassador to Russia, Marina Kaljurand, says Estonia has no territorial claims against Russia, and no-one is going to demolish the monuments to Soviet World War 2 soldiers there.

**29 November 2006** Sergey Ivanov says a receiver for the global satellite navigation system GLONASS, which is being developed in Russia, will be able to receive signals from the other satellite navigation systems, GPS [Global Positioning System] and Galileo by the end of 2007. He calls for the commercial use of GLONASS.

**29 November 2006** The chairman of the Duma's CIS Affairs Committee and former secretary of the Russian Security Council, Andrey Kokoshin, says that he does not share the optimistic assessments of the situation in Iraq and Afghanistan given at the NATO summit in Riga. He fears that Iraq may split up.

**29 November 2006** The Deputy head of Roskosmos Vitaliy Davydov says the new national space policy of the USA carries a threat to world security.

**30 November 2006** The president's special representative of issues of combating terrorism and organised crime, Anatoliy Safonov, says the Russian authorities will cooperate fully with the UK authorities in investigating the death of Aleksandr Litvinenko.

Anatoliy Safonov says an international conference should be convened to discuss the Iraq situation.

**30 November 2006** Agim Ceku, the head of the executive authorities in Kosovo, visits Moscow. He meets top officials of the MFA. He calls for Russia to have a realistic and just approach towards Moscow.

The head of the Duma international affairs committee, Konstantin Kosachev, says the unilateral determination of Kosovo's sovereignty is extremely dangerous. He calls for direct talks between Kosovo and Serbia.

**30 November 2006** Chairman of the Federation Council International Affairs Committee Mikhail Margelov considers that the NATO summit which was held in Riga on 28-29 November showed that the alliance was inclined to pressurize Russia on energy issues.

**30 November 2006** Deputy secretary-general of the CSTO Valeriy Semerikov says the number of students from the member countries of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) studying at the MOD's military educational establishments has increased.

## ***December***

**1 December 2006** Sergey Lavrov meets his British counterpart Margaret Beckett in Jordan. They discuss the Middle East, Iran and the Litvinenko case.

Sergey Lavrov attends the Third Forum for the Future in Jordan. He says Russia "does not oppose a ban on the export of sensitive materials to Iran but opposes sanctions and measures which could influence the essential work of the IAEA in that country".

**1 December 2006** Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says that the approach of NATO's military infrastructure to the borders of Russia cannot fail to cause alarm to Moscow.

**1 December 2006** Russia and Indonesia sign an agreement on cooperation in the field of the peaceful use of atomic energy. The document was signed as part of the Russian-Indonesian summit in the Kremlin by head of the Rosatom Sergey Kiriyenko and Indonesian Foreign Minister Hasan Wirayudha.

Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono has talks in Moscow with Vladimir Putin.

**1 December 2006** Former Deputy Interior Minister Andrey Novikov is appointed head of the Antiterrorist Centre of the CIS.

**2 December 2006** Sergey Ivanov says that there are no signs whatsoever the Russian services are involved in the death of former FSB officer Alexander Litvinenko.

Valter Litvinenko, the father of Aleksandr Litvinenko, accuses the Kremlin of killing his son.

**2 December 2006** Sergey Lavrov says Russia's colleagues in the "six" are in every way trying to avoid the continuation of work within it.

Sergey Lavrov visits Egypt.

**2 December 2006** Sukhoi-30MK fighter jets are delivered to Venezuela.

**3 December 2006** The deputy prime minister and defence minister, Sergey Ivanov, is interviewed on Al Jazeera TV. He discusses Iran, Afghanistan and Georgia.

**4 December 2006** The Leaders of South Ossetia, Taymuraz Mamsurov and North Ossetia, Eduard Kokoyty, meet in Vladikavkaz.

**4 December 2006** Sergey Lavrov attends a OSCE ministerial meeting in Brussels. He criticises NATO countries for not ratifying agreements on adapting the CFE treaty. He says the OSCE concentrates too much on humanitarian work and not enough on politico-military and economic cooperation. He calls for OSCE reform

**4 December 2006** Sergey Lavrov says that the Litvinenko affair is damaging UK-Russian relations.

A request has arrived at the Russian Prosecutor-General's Office from Scotland Yard for legal help in the "Litvinenko case".

A group of Scotland Yard investigators who are probing the case of the murder of Aleksandr Litvinenko arrive in Moscow.

**4 December 2006** Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov visits Azerbaijan.

**4 December 2006** Sergey Lavrov criticizes attempts of some forces to use the OSCE as a playground for forcing through unilateral and politicized approaches to the world's "frozen" conflicts. He says finding solutions to the Georgian-Abkhaz and Georgian-Ossetian conflicts within the OSCE was "impossible".

**5 December 2006** Prosecutor-General Yuriy Chayka says no Russian suspects in the Litvinenko case will be extradited to the UK.

**5 December 2006** Sergey Lavrov says Western partners would like to impose "wide-reaching sanctions against Iran which we are convinced are not commensurate with the real situation and which will inflict damage...We all would like to achieve talks with Iran but such a sweeping approach to imposing bans against collaboration with Iran in various spheres will only deteriorate the situation and we will have an adverse effect." Lavrov says that Russia stands for imposing a ban on delivering technologies and materials related to enrichment of uranium to Iran.

**5 December 2006** The MFA rejects media claims about the alleged existence of a project envisaging Russian participation in exploration for and development of uranium deposits in North Korea.

**5 December 2006** Sergey Lavrov has talks with Serb foreign minister Vuk Draskovic in Brussels. Lavrov says the decision on the status of Kosovo "should be found through talks". He says there should be no sanctions.

**5 December 2006** Vladimir Putin meets Italian Foreign Minister Massimo D'Alema in the Kremlin.

**5 December 2006** Sergey Lavrov calls for OSCE reform.

**5 December 2006** The MFA objects to Georgian State Minister Merab Antadze's presence at the "inauguration" of Dmitriy Sanakoyev as "president of South Ossetia".

Chairman of the Duma's CIS Affairs Committee Andrey Kokoshin says the USA is destabilizing the situation in Georgia. He says this in response to remarks by US Under Secretary of State Nicholas Burns, that as a result of support for the separatist regimes in Georgia and Moldova these countries find it difficult to realize their economic and democratic development potential.

**5 December 2006** Deputy general director of Rosoboronexport Viktor Komardin says Rosoboronexport is offering NATO countries various options for cooperation in the modernization of Soviet- and Russian-made armaments and military hardware possessed by these countries.

**5 December 2006** Rosatom and the Norwegian Foreign Ministry conclude an agreement on cooperation in ensuring nuclear and radiation security.

**6 December 2006** Rosatom's Sergey Kiriyyenko says Russia should not accept and process spent nuclear fuel from other countries.

**6 December 2006** The Duma is set to empower the president to impose special economic measures (sanctions) in the event of an international emergency. The appropriate draft law is passed in the first reading.

**6 December 2006** The Duma passes a resolution stating that the appeal sent by the Abkhaz parliament to the Russian authorities calling on them to recognize Abkhazia's sovereignty and to establish associate relations with it "should be taken into consideration fully by the international community".

The Duma adopts a statement on the results of the 12 November referendum in South Ossetia in which 98 per cent of voters backed independence for the republic. It states: "The State Duma believes that, in shaping its policy, the Russian Federation should, in accordance with international legal standards and precedents

and the legislation of the Russian Federation, take account of the will of the people of South Ossetia as expressed in the referendum.”

**6 December 2006** Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov comments on a statement by the commander of the Estonian defence forces, Maj-Gen Ants Laaneots, who described Russia as an unfriendly state. He rejects this claim.

**6 December 2006** Vladimir Putin approves the proposal from the government of the Russian Federation on signing an agreement with Belarus on joint protection of the external border of the Union State of Belarus and Russia in the air and on creating a unified regional air defence system of Russia and Belarus.

**6 December 2006** Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov has talks with his Greek counterpart Evangelos Meimarakis in Athens.

**6 December 2006** The Russian military completes its mission in Lebanon, to reconstruct bridges destroyed during the Israeli operation last summer.

**7 December 2006** Sergey Lavrov says the investigation into the death of former security service agent Aleksandr Litvinenko has had no effect on bilateral Russian-British relations.

**7 December 2006** Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov visits Ukraine. He discusses the An-70 project which Russia pulled out of in October and Ukraine possibly joining NATO. A session of the subcommittee of the Russian-Ukrainian state commission, headed by the two country's defence ministers, takes place in Kiev.

**7 December 2006** Vladimir Putin chairs a meeting of the commission for the military-industrial complex. It discusses arms sales.

**7 December 2006** The chief of General Staff of the armed forces, Army-Gen Yuriy Baluyevskiy, says Russia is successfully fulfilling the task of destroying its stocks of chemical weapons.

**7 December 2006** Roskosmos spokesman Igor Panarin says Russia would be ready to participate in the US Moon exploration programme as an equal partner. Panarin added that the heads of NASA and Roskosmos had met twice over this issue. "The US space agency is considering our proposals."

**7 December 2006** The Iranian ambassador to Russia, Gholamreza Ansari, meets the Dagestani government. He discusses economic cooperation.

**7 December 2006** Vladimir Putin says he is concerned by the direction of Iran's nuclear programme, hence his call for that country to cooperate with the IAEA in a "transparent and proactive" fashion. He states:

Iran, unlike the DPRK, is a signatory to the NPT (Non-Proliferation Treaty). It continues to abide by the agreement with the IAEA about guarantees, which makes it possible to monitor its nuclear activities. To date, the agency has found no signs in Iran of any switch of its civilian nuclear activities to military purposes...it cannot be said that the IAEA has no serious questions as concerns some aspects of Iran's past nuclear activities. The IAEA cannot yet confirm that there are no undeclared (i.e. military) nuclear activities in Iran, all of which is giving rise to alarm in respect of the

direction of that country's nuclear programme...Our efforts to settle the situation surrounding Iran's nuclear programme are directed towards Iran, in the course of transparent and proactive cooperation and dialogue with the IAEA, clearing up the questions that that agency still has. And in this way restoring trust in the peaceful nature of its efforts in the nuclear sphere.

**7 December 2006** Vladimir Putin says Russia does not need intermediaries to help normalize its relations with Georgia, but would welcome the EU's assistance in explaining to Tbilisi that attempts to justify the use of force against Abkhazia and South Ossetia by aggravating relations with Moscow are counterproductive.

**8 December 2006** The chairman of the Federation Council, Sergey Mironov, says ending the USSR was a mistake. He says the CIS will continue to live.

**8 December 2006** The MiG aircraft corporation begins supplying MiG-29SMT multirole fighters to Algeria.

**8 December 2006** Vladimir Putin has a meeting with Mongolian President Nambaryn Enkhbayar in Moscow.

**9 December 2006** Vladimir Putin has a telephone conversation with the Turkish prime minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

**9 December 2006** The MFA accuses Georgia of a deliberate attempt to hinder the pullout of Russian military bases from the republic.

**11 December 2006** Sergey Lavrov says that the new UN Security Council draft resolution on Iran is based on Russian proposals. He says the concept is to induce Iran to return to the negotiation table with the IAEA, and to restrict the supply to the country of materials and know-how relating to uranium enrichment.

**11 December 2006** Rosatom chief Sergey Kiriyyenko has talks with Iranian Vice-President Gholamreza Aqazadeh. He says Russia and Iran will make every effort to ensure that the Bushehr nuclear power station is handed over on schedule.

**11 December 2006** The MFA says Russia hopes that it will be possible to reach a political solution to the nuclear problem on the Korean peninsula during the six-party talks due to be held in Beijing on 18 December.

**12 December 2006** Dmitriy Medvedev, first deputy prime minister and chairman of the board of Gazprom, believes that Gazprom is interested in joining the Sakhalin-2 project. Gazprom has been having talks with Shell.

**12 December 2006** The president of Atomstroyexport, Sergey Shmatko, says Russia and Iran have reached an agreement on stable financing of the construction of the Bushehr nuclear power station under the existing contract.

**12 December 2006** Viktor Zavarzin, the head of the Duma defence committee, says cooperation between the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) will make it possible to use the potential of these organizations in a more effective way.

**13 December 2006** The MFA criticises the Holocaust conference in Tehran. The Foreign Ministry stresses that Russia has been rejecting Iran's statements

challenging Israel's right to exist and questioning the scale and the very fact of the extermination of Jews during World War 2.

**13 December 2006** Head of the CIS Antiterrorist Centre Police Col-Gen Andrey Novikov says the Centre is setting up its own database of terrorist groups and their leaders.

**13 December 2006** The chief of the General Staff, Army Gen Yuriy Baluyevskiy, says Russia views the US plan to set up an antimissile defence system in Europe "as an erroneous move which may have extremely negative consequences for international security".

The setting up of a European antimissile defence system can only be viewed as an essential reconfiguration of the US military presence. Until now, advance groupings of the US forces in Europe did not have strategic components. The issue of who the US antimissile plans are really targeted at and what possible consequences their implementation may have for Russia and Europe as a whole is therefore becoming quite topical...It is not clear what kind of threat to Europe the antimissile defence district in Poland will make it possible to neutralize (Poland is the country that is trying to top the list of candidates for the role of US exclusive antimissile defence partner). Despite the current tendency towards proliferation of missile technologies in the world, just a few countries are so far capable of creating long-range missiles that could cause damage to European states. Moreover, there are no possibilities in the world to carry out nuclear strikes against US territory. Only some countries possess a significant missile potential: France, Great Britain, Russia and China. It is therefore difficult to imagine that an exchange of missile strikes could take place, taking into account the current level of relations between Europe, the USA and Russia. Or maybe there is someone who is still being guided by such plans? As someone responsible for planning the use of armed forces, I would like to say that we, in Russia, are not guided by such plans.

Baluyevskiy warns against the imposition of sanctions on Iran's nuclear materials which he says will not be "effective".

**14 December 2006** Duma first deputy speaker Oleg Morozov says Russia has no need to discuss any territorial issues with Japan. On 13 December, Japanese foreign minister Taro Aso proposed that the southern Kuril islands be divided in half between Russia and Japan.

**14 December 2006** Sergey Lavrov criticises the USA's attempt to raise Belarus' human rights record in the UN Security Council.

Sergey Lavrov visits Brazil.

**15 December 2006** The British embassy denies allegations that a diplomat from the British embassy in Moscow beat up a Nashi activist.

**15 December 2006** Vladimir Putin meets Lebanese Prime Minister Fu'ad al-Sanyurah in Moscow. Fu'ad al-Sanyurah also meets the head of the Russian Council of Muftis, Ravil Gaynutdin.

The chairman of the Duma's International Affairs Committee, Konstantin Kosachev, says Russia should try and encourage a Syrian-Lebanon rapprochement. He also

says: “It is totally evident that Moscow has a capacity to influence the situation which is dramatically different from that of other co-sponsors of the Middle East peace process (the USA, the EU and the UN) because Russia does not have its own obviously manifest interests in this region, unlike for example the USA which is a large importer of Middle East oil.”

**15 December 2006** The High State Council of the Union State of Russia and Belarus meets in Moscow. Vladimir Putin and Alyaksandr Lukashenka have talks.

**15 December 2006** Head of the Duma international committee and head of the Russian delegation to PACE Konstantin Kosachev says if the January 2007 PACE session debates Moscow-Tbilisi relations, the Russian delegation intends to invite representatives of Abkhazia and South Ossetia to take part.

**15 December 2006** Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov signs a memorandum on understanding with ministers of Mercosur member states on creating a mechanism for political dialogue and cooperation.

**16 December 2006** The MFA calls on Palestinian leaders to seek mutually-acceptable political decisions to avoid a further destabilization of the situation.

**16 December 2006** Sergey Lavrov says Russia is in favour of holding the meeting of international quartet of Middle East mediators.

**17 December 2006** The handover of facilities of the Tbilisi garrison of the Group of Russian Forces in the Transcaucasus begins.

**18 December 2006** Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov signs a resolution which endorses the Russian government's statement of intent to write off the debts of the poorest countries.

A senior adviser to the department of international organizations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Stanislav Pokrovskiy, says that over the past three years Russia had already written off the debts of developing countries to the tune of over 40 billion US dollars.

**18 December 2006** The six-party talks on the North Korean nuclear issue takes place in Beijing. First deputy chairman of the Duma Committee on International Affairs Leonid Slutskiy says the world community should not bow to any ultimate demands from North Korea.

**18 December 2006** Tekhsnabeksport creates a joint venture with Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan to mine uranium.

**18 December 2006** Gazprom head Aleksey Miller and Bulgarian President Georgi Purvanov, Bulgarian Prime Minister Sergey Stanishev and Bulgarian Economy and Energy Minister Rumen Ovcharov sign a package of documents on the further development of Russian-Bulgarian relations in regard to Russian natural gas supplies and transit. The documents extend the contracts on the transit of Russian natural gas to Turkey, Greece and Macedonia through Bulgaria from 2010 to 2030.

**19 December 2006** Gazprom and Gaz de France sign a contract on the extension of hydrocarbons supply until 2030.

**19 December 2006** Sergey Lavrov accuses the Georgian leadership of pursuing an anti-Russian course. He states: "The violations of existing agreements and the rejection of them, attacks on the Russian leadership, attempts at humiliating our peacekeepers, provocations against them, increasing tensions in conflict zones, and trying to mobilize the West against us with speculation about imminent Russian aggression have now become the visiting card of Tbilisi's policy."

Duma deputy speaker Sergey Baburin states:

It is the Russian Federation's right to close access to the territory of the republic of Abkhazia for the deployment of a military contingent from any other state. It is Russia's duty to defend the population and territory of Abkhazia against attacks and threats in the same way as it would defend the population and territory of the Russian Federation against attacks and threats. It is the Russian Federation's right to establish and use military infrastructure and bases on the territory of the republic of Abkhazia and to use the territory of the republic of Abkhazia for the transit of military cargo and military personnel in accordance with the agreements that will exist between Abkhazia and the Russian Federation and without any need for additional interstate agreements.

**19 December 2006** Gazprom states that former Soviet republics will buy gas at market prices.

**19 December 2006** Representatives of the Russian Prosecutor-General's Office have passed on to employees of Britain's Scotland Yard, who are currently visiting Moscow, all materials connected with interrogating six witnesses in the case of the poisoning of Aleksandr Litvinenko.

**19 December 2006** Syrian President Bashar al-Asad visits Moscow for talks with Vladimir Putin. Bashar al-Asad describes reports that Damascus transferred arms from Russia to Lebanon as "concocted".

**19 December 2006** Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has talks with Spanish foreign minister Miguel Angel Moratinos in Moscow.

**20 December 2006** The Duma issues a statement on the development of the CIS.

**20 December 2006** Sergey Lavrov accuses the Georgian government's policies of being immoral.

Sergey Lavrov holds a news conference assessing Russian foreign policy in 2006.

**20 December 2006** The president's newly appointed special representative for the Middle East and deputy foreign minister, Aleksandr Saltanov, thinks that many parties would like to see Russia play a more active role in settling the Middle East conflict.

**20 December 2006** The Duma refuses to ratify a protocol of the European human rights convention that deals with the work of the European Court of Human Rights.

**21 December 2006** The Itera group of companies begins gradually cutting off gas supplies to regions of Georgia because of their outstanding debts.

**21 December 2006** Sergey Lavrov says Russia is counting on transition of power in Turkmenistan to be carried out within the legal framework following the death of President Saparmyrat Nyyazow.

**21 December 2006** The MFA criticises comments made by the US ambassador to Belarus, Karen Stewart, on the Russo-Belarusian energy relationship.

**21 December 2006** Gazprom wins a tender for the exploration and development of Block 19 in the Lebanese shelf of the Mediterranean Sea. It will be granted rights to develop it for 30 years.

**22 December 2006** Vladimir Putin visits Ukraine.

**22 December 2006** Vladimir Putin sends a message of condolences to Gurbanguly Berdimuhammedow, the deputy prime minister and acting president of Turkmenistan, in connection with the death of President Saparmyrat Nyyazow.

The council of foreign ministers of the CSTO meet in Minsk and discuss the situation in Turkmenistan.

**22 December 2006** Gazprom signs three contracts with Georgia for the supply of gas at the price of 235 dollars per 1,000 cubic metres.

**22 December 2006** The latest round of six-sided consultations on the North Korean nuclear problem ends in Beijing.

Konstantin Kosachev, chairman of the Duma committee for international affairs blames the USA for the lack of results at the six-party talks on the North Korea nuclear problem.

**22 December 2006** Defence minister Sergey Ivanov criticises US plans to deploy weapons in space.

**22 December 2006** The Federation Council adopts a statement "in connection with appeals to the Federation Council for the Russian Federation to recognize the independence of South Ossetia and the republic of Abkhazia".

**22 December 2006** Maj-Gen Zakir Hasanov, commander of the Azeri Interior Ministry troops and deputy interior minister, receives Maj-Gen Sergey Bunin, chief of staff of the Russian Interior Ministry's Internal Troops.

**23 December 2006** Vladimir Putin and US President George Bush discuss Iran over the telephone.

**23 December 2006** Russo-Azeri talks on gas supplies to Azerbaijan in 2007 end in Moscow.

**23 December 2006** The presidents of Russia and Belarus discuss relations between their two countries over the telephone.

**24 December 2006** Gazprom says it is ready to increase supplies of Russian gas to Georgia in 2007 if required.

**24 December 2006** The MFA appeals "to all political forces in the Palestinian territories and Israel and all the interested regional parties to support the results of

a meeting between Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Palestinian Authority President Mahmud Abbas".

**25 December 2006** Sergey Lavrov says the UN Security Council resolution with regard to Iran's nuclear programme fully reflects Russia's economic interests. He stresses that while adopting the resolution "it was necessary to find the right balance between three objectives: to prevent violation of the WMD proliferation regime; to maintain conditions for negotiating with Iran and to prevent damaging any legitimate ties with Iran in various spheres".

Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Kislyak says Moscow hopes that Tehran will not respond negatively to the UN Security Council resolution on Iran. The UNSC passes a resolution imposing sanctions on Iran.

**25 December 2006** Russia completes its military withdrawal from Georgia.

The Office of State Minister for Conflict Settlement protests at the opening of the representative office of the Republic of North Ossetia - Alania in Tskhinvali (South Ossetia).

**26 December 2006** The MFA expresses concern over the situation in the Horn of Africa.

**26 December 2006** Gazprom and KazMunayGaz sign a protocol on terms of cooperation in 2007.

**26 December 2006** The CSTO and Eurasian Economic Community general secretaries, Nikolay Bordyuzha and Grigoriy Rapota, discuss interaction in border and customs policies, military-technical and military-economic cooperation, and migration control. Their common interests include transport network security, measures against money-laundering and funding of terrorism.

**26 December 2006** Russo-Belarusian gas talks end in failure in Moscow.

**27 December 2006** The Procurator-General asks the USA to hand over Leonid Nevzlin, the former co-owner of the Yukos oil company.

**27 December 2006** Gazprom Chairman Aleksey Miller says that if a gas delivery contract with Belarus is not signed, Gazprom will discontinue pumping gas to Belarusian consumers as of 1000 (0600 gmt) on 1 January 2007. This could affect supplies to Europe.

Spokesman for the executive secretary of the Russian-Belarusian union state Ivan Makushok criticises Gazprom's approach towards Belarus.

**27 December 2006** Russia and Moldova sign a bilateral treaty on Russia's accession to the WTO.

**27 December 2006** The chairman of the Federation Council's International Affairs Committee, Mikhail Margelov, says that the execution of Saddam Husayn will fuel civil war in Iraq.

**28 December 2006** Gazprom says its final offer to Belarus is 105 dollars for 1,000 cu.m. of natural gas.

**29 December 2006** Gazprom deputy chairman Aleksandr Medvedev rejects Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka's claims that Russia is using blackmail during gas supply talks with Belarus.

**29 December 2006** Human rights ombudsman Vladimir Lukin says that the execution of Saddam Husayn will be a mistake.

Head of Russia's Council of Muftis Mufti Ravil Gaynutdin says he sees Saddam Husayn's planned execution as unacceptable.

The head of the State Duma's International Affairs Committee Konstantin Kosachev says the execution of former Iraqi President Saddam Husayn will lead to a new flare-up in the confrontation between ethnic groups in the country and the possibility of the state of Iraq disintegrating into several countries.

**29 December 2006** Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Saltanov says the presence of the multinational force in Iraq is a factor of instability. He says that Russia: "has been guided by a firm belief that normalization can be achieved only through developing a constructive dialogue with the leading political forces and the ethnic-denominational communities of Iraq and through achieving national accord and reconciliation". "We expect that coordinated actions by the world community using the potential of collective peacekeeping and fully meeting the interests of the Iraqi people will help outline the most efficient ways for resolving these difficult but extremely important tasks."

**29 December 2006** Atomstroyeksport states that Russian experts have completed the next stage of precommissioning work on the first power unit at Iran's Bushehr nuclear plant. Atomstroyeksport also said that "more than 95 per cent of the construction of the first nuclear power unit at Bushehr has been completed". The physical start-up of the power unit is scheduled for September 2007 in line with the timetable for precommissioning work agreed with the Iranian side.

**29 December 2006** Russian UN envoy Vitaliy Churkin says Moscow hopes that Tehran will take measures to restore confidence in its nuclear programme.

**30 December 2006** Konstantin Kosachev, chairman of the State Duma Committee on International Affairs, says Saddam Husayn certainly deserves punishment but his execution is a mistake.

**30 December 2006** Vladimir Putin and the acting president of Turkmenistan, Gurbanguly Berdimuhammedow, have a telephone conversation.

**31 December 2006** The MFA says the execution of Iraqi ex-president Saddam Husayn has led to the escalation of violence in Iraq.



