

## Russian Foreign Policy: A Chronology

### October-December 2004

#### *October*

**1 October 2004** The Joint Control Commission for the settlement of the Georgian-Osetian conflict meets in Moscow.

**1 October 2004** The Foreign Ministry (MFA) urges Israel to refrain from using indiscriminate force during the military operation on the Palestinian territories in Gaza.

**1 October 2004** ASEAN Secretary-General Ong Keng Yong visits Moscow for talks with Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

**2 October 2004** Finance Minister Aleksey Kudrin says Russia is prepared to back France and Germany's initiative on the issue of Iraqi debt repayment. He is attending an IMF and World Bank meeting in Washington. Russia accounts for more than 8bn dollars of the total debt. It has now been proposed that half that debt be written off immediately and that repayments of the remaining half be frozen for at least three years.

**3 October 2004** Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Aleksiy II calls on Pope John Paul II to stop the practice of proselytizing on the territory where Russian Orthodox Church believers live.

**4 October 2004** The head of the Russian Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) delegation and chairman of the Duma Committee on International Affairs, Konstantin Kosachev, says the Russian delegation is offering a whole series of initiatives as part of the discussion of the fight against terrorism at the autumn session of PACE.

Head of the Federation Council International Affairs Committee Mikhail Margelov criticizes PACE for agreeing to hold a debate on Russian-Georgian relations without first consulting Russia.

**5 October 2004** Vladimir Putin sends a letter of greeting to an international conference entitled "Counteracting the funding of terrorism in the Eurasian region: International cooperation and development of strategies for discovering and cutting off sources of funding for terrorism".

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At the conference Finance Minister Aleksey Kudrin says a Russian proposal to set up a Eurasian group to counter the financing of international terrorism has been supported by China, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine. He says Russia is actively cooperating with 68 countries in countering the financing of terrorism. The group will be set up on 6 October. Its establishment is supported by the World Bank, Interpol, G8, Council of Europe and the Financial Action Task Force against money-laundering (FATF).

**5 October 2004** Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov opens an enlarged meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Union State of Russia and Belarus. He says Russian-Belarusian trade "may exceed the threshold of 15bn dollars" in 2004.

**5 October 2004** Sergey Lavrov and the Sudanese president's special representative on Darfur and Interior Minister Maj-Gen Abd-al-Rahim Husayn have talks in Moscow on the Darfur conflict.

**5 October 2004** Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has telephone conversations with Palestinian National Authority leader Yasir Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom to discuss the draft resolution on the situation in the Gaza Strip proposed to the UN Security Council.

**5 October 2004** The MFA denies media claims that France, Russia and China are hampering investigations into the dealings of the former Iraqi authorities regarding the oil-for-food humanitarian programme.

**6 October 2004** Chechen President Alu Alkhanov addresses PACE at Strasbourg. He rules out talks with Chechen separatist leader Aslan Maskhadov. Alkhanov says he has appointed a human rights commissioner for Chechnya, Lema Khasuyev.

**7 October 2004** The Federal Customs Service reports that Russia's foreign trade rose 26% in the first eight months of 2004, totalling 151.8bn dollars. The trade balance was in surplus for January-August 2004, amounting to 58.9bn dollars, against 49.9bn dollars in 2003.

Russia's foreign trade with non-CIS countries came to 122.9bn dollars in January-August 2004 (an increase of 23.2%) and 28.9bn dollars with the CIS countries (an increase of 39.2%). Russian exports in January-August 2004 totalled 105.4bn dollars, an increase of 23.6% on January-August 2003. Imports over the same period amounted to 46.4bn dollars (an increase of 31.5%).

**7 October 2004** PACE rapporteur Rudolf Bindig describes the human rights situation in Chechnya as catastrophic. The chairman of the Duma international affairs committee, Konstantin Kosachev, criticises the report.

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**7 October 2004** Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Alekseyev says Russia "has an understanding with the Iranian side concerning a visit to Tehran by Russian President Vladimir Putin." There is as yet no firm date for Putin's visit. Alekseyev says Russia and Iran might sign a new agreement on the fight against terrorism.

The MFA says Russia will not work on nuclear projects with any state should the IAEA object.

Aleksandr Nyago, the president of Russia's Tvel corporation, the Russian Federation's monopoly supplier of nuclear fuel rods for atomic power stations, says the Iranian leadership's wish to embark on the production of its own nuclear fuel rods for the Bushehr nuclear power station, "starting with the enrichment of uranium, worries Russian specialists".

**7 October 2004** MFA spokesman Aleksandr Yakovenko says Russia would like to see the situation in Georgia stabilize. The MOD rejects US criticisms of Russian bases in Georgia, stating that Russia has complied with the 1999 Istanbul agreement. Yakovenko rejects US concerns that Russia has not fully met its obligations to reduce tactical nuclear weapons in Europe.

**7 October 2004** Members of the Hiroshima World Peace Mission inspect the dismantling process of decommissioned nuclear submarines and radiation safety procedures in Maritime Territory.

**7 October 2004** The Russian MOD grants the Afghan military vehicles and spare parts worth 50m dollars. The hardware is being handed over according to the agreement on cooperation signed by the Russian and Afghan Defence Ministries in 2002. Under the agreement Russia has undertaken to deliver to Afghanistan goods worth 110m dollars.

**7 October 2004** Deputy Foreign minister Aleksandr Alekseyev says he sees no possibility for the next round of the six-sided talks on the North Korean nuclear programme being convened earlier than the second half of November. The accords reached in Beijing in June on holding the fourth round of talks, which had been planned for the end of September, have not been implemented. Alekseyev says this is because of major differences between the USA and North Korea.

**8 October 2004** It is reported that shipments of oil to China along the Trans-Siberian Railway have been almost halved since the start of 2004.

**8 October 2004** The MFA condemns the bombing of hotels in Taba, Egypt.

**8 October 2004** Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov visits India to plan for Vladimir Putin's December visit.

**8 October 2004** Seregy Lavrov says Russia intends to implement the provisions of the UN Security Council Resolution 1566 on additional measures in the fight against terrorism.

**9 October 2004** Vladimir Putin meets the president and prime minister of Ukraine, Leonid Kuchma and Viktor Yanukovich. By December Russia and Ukraine are to prepare a package of intergovernment agreements simplifying mutual trade and Russian-Ukrainian border crossing for goods and people.

**9 October 2004** Roskosmos deputy head Georgiy Polishchuk and General Manager of the Algerian Space Agency Azzedine Oussedik sign in Algeria an agreement on mutual understanding and cooperation in space technologies and their application.

**10 October 2004** Sergey Lavrov arrives in Iran to discuss problems of international security with the emphasis on the development of Russian-Iranian cooperation to combat terrorism. He will also discuss civil nuclear cooperation. Sergey Lavrov says Moscow and Tehran could sign an agreement on Russian nuclear fuel supplies to Iran in the very near future.

Lavrov says Russia supports the holding of a Caspian summit in Iran.

**11 October 2004** The MFA protests to Finland regarding the opening of the Kavkaz-Tsentr web site. It is later closed down.

**11 October 2004** Russia lifts restrictions on flights by Georgian aircraft in its airspace. The decision was taken after talks between the heads of the two countries' civil aviation services. Georgia acknowledges the debts of its airlines and has undertaken to pay them off.

**11 October 2004** MFA spokesman Aleksandr Yakovenko says Russia and China are for setting up a cooperative system of security and cooperation in the Asia Pacific region with equal rights for the participants and embracing the whole region in accordance with the requirements of global stability.

**11 October 2004** Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov is interviewed on Al-Arabiya TV. He confirmed that Russia would deliver preventive strikes against so-called bases and concentrations of terrorists "anywhere in the world" without warning and with the use of any type of weapons apart from nuclear weapons. Ivanov says that Russia would be glad to take an active part in restoring Iraq's infrastructure and independence, but this is exceptionally difficult today in view of the extremely unstable situation. He comments that the US military presence in Central Asia did not worry Moscow since the US Armed Forces were in the region temporarily on the basis of a UN decision, and also because Russia had bases and allies there. He accuses the West of double standards over terrorism.

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**12 October 2004** Vladimir Putin appoints a special presidential representative on issues of international cooperation in the war on terror and transnational organized crime. He is Anatoliy Safonov.

**12 October 2004** Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin visits Moscow for talks with Putin.

**12 October 2004** Sergey Lavrov visits Kyrgyzstan.

Lavrov calls on Georgia and Abkhazia to settle their conflict on the basis of existing tools.

Lavrov also says that Russia will be partners with any US administration.

**12 October 2004** Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov and the chairman of the Executive Committee and executive secretary of the CIS, Vladimir Rushaylo, discuss ways of strengthening military aspects of cooperation amongst CIS member states.

**12 October 2004** Vladimir Putin has talks in Moscow with Brazilian Vice-President Jose Alencar. In 2003 Brazil exported goods worth 1.5bn dollars to Russia and imported goods worth 555m dollars.

**13 October 2004** Vladimir Putin says that when constructing pipelines in the Far East, Russia should take into consideration its partners' interests, but proceed from its own national interests. He says Moscow welcomes China's intention to invest over 12bn dollars in the Russian economy. "We would like this investment to be reasonably weighted, taking into consideration the prospects of our economic relations to be focused on development in hi-tech spheres."

**13 October 2004** Vladimir Putin is interviewed by the Chinese media on the eve of his visit to China.

**13 October 2004** Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov says Russia believes it to be counterproductive to put the North Korean nuclear issue on the agenda of the UN Security Council. "To table this issue at the UN Security Council now would mean to undermine the process of resolving the issue, which is taking shape ... we are in favour of continuing the six-party talks on settling the North Korean problem."

**13 October 2004** Russian Foreign Ministry ambassador at large Sergey Kirpichenko says not a single Russian specialist, apart from the embassy staff, is now working in Iraq on a permanent basis. He is attending an international conference on Iraq in Tokyo.

**13 October 2004** Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov attends a meeting of NATO defence ministers in Romania.

**14 October 2004** Sergey Ivanov in Romania says servicemen in the Russian armed forces will remain in Transdnestr until all Russian military property and ammunition is removed. He says Russia will make pre-emptive strikes against terrorists. He accuses Lithuania and Latvia of hampering Russian military transit to Kaliningrad following their accession to NATO.

**14 October 2004** Vladimir Putin visits China.

**14 October 2004** Armenian Prime Minister Andranik Markaryan and Igor Levitin, Russian transport minister and co-chairman of the Armenian-Russian commission on economic cooperation, discuss the situation which has developed at the Verkhniy Lars border checkpoint after the closure of the Russian border with Georgia.

**14 October 2004** The MFA calls on the USA and Iraq's interim government to take urgent measures to ensure access of international inspectors to Iraq. Russia supports carrying out in full the UN Security Council resolutions on Iraq's former WMD potential under Unmovic and IAEA auspices.

**15 October 2004** Russia's foreign trade turnover between January and August 2004 amounts to 168.3 billion dollars, which is 26.4% up against the same period in 2003. During the period, Russia increased its exports by 27.3% to 109.7bn dollars. Imports grew by 24.8% to 58.5bn dollars. Russia had a positive foreign trade balance in the first eight months of 2004 (51.2bn dollars). The figure for January-August 2003 was 39.3bn dollars. Russia's foreign trade turnover with its principal foreign partners grew by 26% during the first eight months of 2004 to 151.878bn dollars, and trade with the EU member countries by 23.7%, to 64.044bn dollars.

**15 October 2004** The Abkhaz parliament appeals to the Russian leadership to support the idea of establishing associate relations with the Russian Federation. This could be based on the following principles: Abkhazia pursues a foreign policy that is coordinated with Russia's and does not run counter to Russia's interests; Abkhazia allows Russia to deploy military bases on its territory and guards its borders jointly with Russia; Abkhazia enters a currency and customs union with Russia and synchronizes its legal system with Russia's.

**15 October 2004** The MFA criticizes a parliamentary inquiry from Germany's Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union "about the economic future of 'Koenigsberg Region' after EU expansion". The MFA says this "verges on interference in Russia's internal affairs" and has caused "bafflement and is unacceptable".

**15 October 2004** The MFA calls on Israel to pull its troops out of the Gaza Strip as soon as possible and on the Palestinian leadership to take tough and decisive measures against extremists.

**15 October 2004** The Duma instructs its committee on the budget and taxes to ask the Russian Federation government to explain its decision to write off 50% of Iraq's debt to the Russian Federation. Deputies reckon this sum amounts to about 4bn dollars.

**16 October 2004** The Chechen separatist parliament condemns PACE Resolution 1402 on Chechnya adopted on 7 October.

**16 October 2004** Vladimir Putin visits Tajikistan. Russia writes off \$242 million of Tajikistan's debt to Russia in return for the Norak optical-electronic tracking station. The withdrawal of Russian border guards from the Pamirs stretch of the Tajik-Afghan border will start in 2005. In 2006, Russia will hand over the control and protection of the border to Tajikistan. Simultaneously, Russia will set up in Tajikistan an operational border group to prevent terrorist incursions and drug trafficking. The Russian 201<sup>st</sup> MR Division will also acquire a base. This will also be a base for the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO).

**16 October 2004** Deputy foreign minister Vladimir Chizhov has talks in the USA. He says the USA has given an assurance that "the modernization of military installations in the Baltic countries is not aimed against Russia's security interests".

**16 October 2004** Vladimir Putin signs a decree by which Russia will join the treaty on creating the Central Asian Cooperation Organization (CACO) which was earlier signed by Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

**17 October 2004** Sergey Lavrov says Iran should take voluntary steps to dispel the International Atomic Energy Agency's concerns about its nuclear programme.

**18 October 2004** A summit of presidents of the Central Asian Cooperation Organization countries opens in Dushanbe. Vladimir Putin attends.

**18 October 2004** The MFA says the the results of the election campaign in Belarus "reflects a cross-section of public opinion in the republic". It also says that the referendum on the constitutional amendment abolishing restrictions on the number of times the same person can be re-elected president of the republic is the choice of the Belarusian people and it has to be respected.

**18 October 2004** Vladimir Putin says:

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Everyone knows very well that Russia was always opposed to military action in Iraq. And today our opinion and President Bush's differ very significantly. International terrorist attacks in Iraq are directed today not only and not even so much against the international coalition of forces as against President Bush himself.

International terrorism is aimed at inflicting maximum damage on Bush's election campaign. International terrorism is aimed at not allowing Bush to serve a second presidential term in America.

If they achieve this goal then of course they will celebrate their victory, they will celebrate their tactical and moreover all-important victory over America and, in the wider sense, over the forces of the international antiterrorist coalition. I have in mind the role and significance that America has in this coalition.

**18 October 2004** The MFA says Russia is in favour of removing all the outstanding problems with regard to the transparency and nature of Iran's nuclear programme. This is said in comments from the Russian Foreign Ministry's information and press department in connection with the 15 October meeting of G8 political directors in Washington, which discussed Iran's nuclear programme.

Aleksandr Rumyantsev, the head of the Federal Atomic Energy Agency (Rosatom), says cooperation between Russia and Iran in the field of nuclear energy is being conducted in accordance with the IAEA provisions.

**18 October 2004** Slovak Foreign Minister Eduard Kukan visits Moscow.

**18 October 2004** Sergey Ivanov says Russian and US combat ships are to stage a joint exercise in the Eastern Mediterranean.

**19 October 2004** The 26th meeting of the CIS Electric Energy Council takes place in Baku. The meeting is being attended by heads of leading energy holdings of nine CIS countries, as well as a delegation from Iran. The chairman of the council and head of the Russian company United Energy Systems Anatoliy Chubays, stresses the need for synchronizing the energy systems of the Commonwealth countries.

**19 October 2004** Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev visits Moscow for talks with Vladimir Putin.

**19 October 2004** Sergey Lavrov visits the Netherlands for talks with the foreign ministers of the EU troika. He calls for the EU to step up the fight against terrorism and for closer cooperation between Russia and the EU in fighting terrorism. "Apart from the dialogue with each of the EU countries on the need for more effective bilateral steps in resolving specific problems, we reaffirmed our interest in developing multilateral forms of cooperation ... there is an understanding that a meeting of the OSCE foreign ministers in Sofia in December should express its views in the direction of more specific cooperation within the framework of the

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organization, which would make life more difficult for the terrorists and their accomplices."

He also discusses Kaliningrad, and calls on Estonia and Latvia to respect minority rights. He says cargo transit to Kaliningrad via Lithuania has worsened since Lithuania joined the EU.

**19 October 2004** The chairman of the Duma's committee on international affairs, Konstantin Kosachev, says the reaction at the Duma to the initiative of a group of CDU-CSU deputies in the German Bundestag on the development of Kaliningrad Region following the EU's expansion has been "highly negative". He says the Duma is concerned by the CDU-CSU initiative on the development of a special status as a "Lithuanian-Russian-Polish Euro-region".

**19 October 2004** Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov visits Bulgaria.

**20 October 2004** The MFA expresses concern about possible US plans to site US antiballistic defence missile interceptors at the British "air force base" in Fylingdales in North Yorkshire.

**20 October 2004** Italian Deputy Prime Minister Gianfranco Fini visits Moscow for talks with Vladimir Putin.

**20 October 2004** The Duma ratifies an agreement between the governments of Russia and Belarus on joint logistical support for regional groupings of troops of the Russian and Belarusian armed forces.

**20 October 2004** The MFA issues a statement on the Middle East. The MFA says a long-term settlement of the Middle East problems "is possible through developing a formula of comprehensive peace in the region". This approach requires resumption of negotiations between Syria and Israel, as well as Lebanon and Israel, and a just resolution of the Palestinian problem on the universal legal basis worked out at the UN and secured in UN Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, 1397 and 1515 and the Madrid principles.

**21 October 2004** Sergey Lavrov says he opposes US sanctions against Belarus.

**21 October 2004** Lavrov states that the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) should consolidate and step up its fight against terrorism. He is attending an SCO meeting in Astana. He says the possibility of India joining the SCO "was not discussed during the meeting between the Russian, Chinese and Indian foreign ministers today".

**22 October 2004** LUKoil's President Vagit Alekperov says LUKoil wants to export crude oil to China via the pipeline that is currently being built in Kazakhstan.

**22 October 2004** The Duma ratifies the Kyoto Protocol.

**22 October 2004** The Duma ratifies the protocol of agreement on partnership and cooperation between the Russian Federation and the European Union relating to the accession to the EU of 10 new states, including Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. The vote in favour of ratification was 325.

**22 October 2004** Vladimir Putin sends a message in reply to Iraqi Prime Minister Iyad Allawi. He calls on the world community to mobilize additional resources to support the efforts being made by the provisional government of Iraq.

**22 October 2004** Putin says he supports the idea of holding an international conference in Saudi Arabia on fighting terrorism. In a responding message to the Saudi Crown Prince Abdallah Bin Abd-al-Aziz al Sa'ud, Putin thanks the Crown Prince for his letter of 10 September regarding the Saudi initiative to hold an international conference in Riyadh at the beginning of February 2005.

**22 October 2004** Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says the the first Russian peacekeeping brigade will be deployed in Transdnestr, Abkhazia and South Osetia - where Russia is already carrying out peacekeeping functions.

**22 October 2004** Rosatom welcomes the leading European countries' (Britain, France and Germany) decision to cooperate with Tehran in the area of nuclear technology and nuclear fuel supplies to Iran for its research reactor.

**22 October 2004** The Duma issues a statement saying that the elections to the Belarusian National Assembly and the republican referendum were "open, free, democratic and legitimate".

**23 October 2004** The MFA welcomes the extension of the mandate for UN armed forces in Cyprus to 15 June 2005.

**24 October 2004** A telephone conversation takes place between the French and the Russian presidents, Jacques Chirac and Vladimir Putin.

**24 October 2004** An international public committee, Russia in a United Europe, says Russia and the European Union need a new partnership and cooperation agreement. The committee's coordinator, Duma deputy Vladimir Ryzhkov, says the 1994 agreement does not reflect the realities of the enlarged union.

**25 October 2004** The Secretariat of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the Secretariat of the Eurasian Economic Community integration committee sign a cooperation protocol in Moscow. The document is signed by

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CSTO Secretary-General Nikolay Bordyuzha and Eurasian Economic Community Secretary-General Grigoriy Rapota.

**25 October 2004** Russian ambassador-at-large Igor Savolskiy has a meeting in Chisinau with Moldovan President Vladimir Voronin. Russian representative to the Dniester settlement talks, Valeriy Nesterushkin, also attends.

**25 October 2004** The MFA's roving ambassador Sergey Kirpichenko says in Damascus that Russia and Syria need to coordinate their efforts towards settling the situation in Iraq.

**25 October 2004** Aleksandr Rumyantsev, head of Rosatom, says Russia is ready to cooperate with the leading EU states in the implementation of Iran's nuclear energy programme.

**25 October 2004** The speaker of the Federation Council, Sergey Mironov, meets in Brussels with NATO Secretary-General Jaap De Hoop Scheffer to discuss anti-terrorist cooperation.

**25 October 2004** Vladimir Putin signs a decree "On measures to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1556 of 30 July 2004" embargoing arms to Sudan.

**25 October 2004** Sergey Yastrzhembskiy, an aide to Vladimir Putin, says the EU has not been fulfilling its obligations on cargo transit to and from the exclave of Kaliningrad via Lithuania to Russia.

**25 October 2004** Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov approves a directive establishing a government commission for Russia's integration into the international economic system. The commission represents "a permanent coordinating body created for coordinating activities of the federal executive bodies in Russia's relations with the CIS member states, with other integrative structures within the CIS, as well as with the EU and with the forum of Asia-Pacific economic cooperation".

**26 October 2004** Agriculture Minister Aleksey Gordeyev says Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan should consolidate their efforts to work out a joint grain export policy.

**26 October 2004** Vladimir Putin visits Ukraine.

**26 October 2004** Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says he is sceptical that the international peacekeeping operation in Iraq could be transferred under the UN aegis.

**26 October 2004** Federation Council speaker Sergey Mironov meets NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer to discuss cooperation within the Russia-NATO Council. Mironov is in Brussels to take part in an international seminar on legal regulations in the struggle against international terrorism and the harmonization of national legislation.

**26 October 2004** Foreign minister Sergey Lavrov says Russia has no intention of reducing its dialogue on energy with the European Union to the price of its fuel. He says Europe will in the future remain Russia's main fuel market. He describes "assisting Russian companies in the promotion of major international projects" as one of the main objectives of "Russia's energy diplomacy". He cites the construction of the Baltic pipeline system, the North European gas pipeline and other projects as examples.

**26 October 2004** Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov opens a joint sitting of the collegiums of the Russian and Belarusian MODs. He says unification of the defence potential of Russia and Belarus is "one of the major stabilizing factors in ensuring security in the European space". Sergey Ivanov and his Belarusian opposite number, Leanid Maltsaw, sign a plan of cooperation between the Russian and Belarusian defence ministries.

**27 October 2004** The president of the Academy of Military Sciences, Makhmut Gareyev, says Washington is seeking to make a long-standing dream come true by acquiring the technical ability to destroy Russian ballistic missiles over Russian territory. He is responding to a statement by Lt-Gen Henry Obering, director of the US Missile Defence Agency.

Andrey Kokoshin, member of the Duma commission on the implementation of Russia-US Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty, says Russia has or in the near future will have arms capable of effectively surmounting all future ABM systems, including those that are currently being developed in the USA.

**27 October 2004** The MFA says Russia and the USA "are cooperating actively in the area of the fight against terrorism". A joint US-Russian anti-terrorist commission is meeting in Moscow. Richard Armitage, US first undersecretary of state, is co-chairman of the group on the American side, and Sergey Kislyak, deputy head of the Russian Foreign Ministry, is co-chairman on the Russian side. Anatoliy Safronov, special representative of the Russian president on issues of international cooperation in the fight against terrorism and transnational organized crime, and Cofer Black, US State Department coordinator on issues connected with the fight against terrorism, will also be taking part in the meeting.

**27 October 2004** The chairman of the board of Soyuzneftegaz, and the head of the Union of Oil and Gas Producers of the Russian Federation, Yuriy Shafranik, says Soyuzneftegaz will begin exploiting the Al-Rafidayn oil field in Iraq by the end of 2005 at the earliest. Shafranik notes that LUKoil has a good chance of working the largest oil field in Iraq, Western Qurnah-2, following the forming of a strategic alliance with US company ConocoPhillips.

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**27 October 2004** Special ambassador Andrey Urnov, who heads the Russian working group on the Caspian, says Moscow does not believe demilitarization of the Caspian is advisable under present conditions.

**27 October 2004** Sergey Lavrov addresses the Duma in closed session on hot spots in Russian foreign policy.

**27 October 2004** The MFA says it welcomes the approval by the Israeli Knesset of the plan of disengagement with the Palestinians.

**27 October 2004** Sergey Lavrov says Russia is waging a fight against terrorism strictly within the framework of the constitution. He is speaking at a meeting of the European Business Club.

**27 October 2004** The Federation Council ratifies the Kyoto Protocol.

**27 October 2004** The Duma ratifies the Russian-German treaty on mutual easing of travel arrangements for Russian and German citizens. The agreement, signed on 10 December 2003, has been temporarily enforced since 1 January 2004.

**28 October 2004** Tatarstan President Mintimer Shaymiyev visits Kazakhstan.

**28 October 2004** Deputy Head of the Federal Energy Agency Oleg Gordeyev says in 2004 Russia will provide 12.5% of all primary oil supplies and 35% of natural gas supplies to the world market. The main export market for Russian fuel is the European Union, Gordeyev notes that: "Oil accounts for 61% of all supplies, natural gas for 24%, petroleum products for 12%, and condensate and liquefied gas for 3%. Leaving out internal deliveries [within the EU] and resale, the EU has two external sources of hydrocarbons, namely the OPEC countries and the CIS. Oil deliveries to Europe from OPEC are slightly higher than those from the CIS, but thanks to gas and petroleum products, the share of the CIS in Europe's oil and gas market is higher than that of OPEC. The CIS countries account for 53.8% of all oil, gas and petroleum products supplies to Europe (Russia 45.1%, Azerbaijan 1.4% and Kazakhstan 7.3%), and OPEC for 46.1%."

**28 October 2004** Igor Ivanov, the secretary of the Security Council, discusses anti-terrorist cooperation with the USA at a meeting with Richard Armitage, the first US deputy secretary of state.

**28 October 2004** The Russian Air Force denies claims by Georgia about an alleged "violation of Georgia's airspace" by Russian helicopters.

**28 October 2004** The head of the Russian side of the Joint Control Commission for the settlement of the Georgian-Osetian conflict, the MFA's ambassador Valeriy

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Kenyaykin says Russia is pinning great hopes on a meeting between Georgian Prime Minister Zurab Zhvania and President of South Osetia Eduard Kokoiti.

**28 October 2004** Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov says according to UN Security Council decisions, it is not the UN but the multinational coalition force that has to provide security in Iraq, in conjunction with the interim government of that country.

Defence and Foreign Ministry officials refute US media reports that the Russian special forces helped move 380 tonnes of explosives out of Iraq before the US attack on Iraq in March 2003.

**28 October 2004** Khrunichev State Space Research and Production Centre deputy general director Denis Pivnyuk says it plans to assist South Korea in construction of the Korean Space Launch Vehicle (KSLV-1).

**29 October 2004** Tatneft signs an agreement to drill for oil in Kazakhstan.

**29 October 2004** The MFA says it expects "Israel to honour its promises and allow Yasir Arafat to return to the Palestinian territories after his treatment".

**29 October 2004** Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov visits Germany to discuss economic relations with Russia.

**29 October 2004** Deputy head of a Rosoboroneksport department Vadim Startsev says Rosoboroneksport is ready to scale up interaction in implementing the anti-terrorism programme in the NATO-Russia framework. He says the NATO-Russia Council's working group on defence industry, research and technologies, established in May 2003, must play a significant role in this process.

**29 October 2004** NATO military representatives have arrived in Russia to observe an anti-terrorist exercise in the Moscow region.

**29 October 2004** The MFA says it hopes that the coming into force of the European constitution will promote a settlement of problems with human rights throughout European space.

**29 October 2004** Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Alekseyev says Russia and China have resolved their territorial issue once and for all. This had been achieved following the Russian-Chinese summit meeting in Beijing on 14 October.

**29 October 2004** The MFA denounces the US blockade of Cuba and wants it lifted as soon as possible.

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**29 October 2004** The seventh session of the Kyrgyz-Russian intergovernmental commission for trade, economic, scientific and technical cooperation, meets in Bishkek.

**30 October 2004** Vladimir Putin meets the chairmen of the Federation Council and the Duma, Sergey Mironov and Boris Gryzlov. They discuss dual citizenship for residents of Russia and Ukraine. Putin instructs Mironov and Gryzlov to start consultations with the Ukrainian parliament next week.

**30 October 2004** MFA spokesman Aleksandr Yakovenko says Russia "will fulfil its obligations to destroy 20% of chemical weapons stockpiles by 29 April 2007".

**31 October 2004** A Duma delegation led by Duma Committee for Foreign Affairs chairman Konstantin Kosachev leaves for South Korea to discuss bilateral cooperation.

## ***November***

**1 November 2004** Secretary of the Security Council Igor Ivanov meets the chairwoman of the Georgian Parliament, Nino Burjanadze. He says there are still unresolved problems in relations between Russia and Georgia.

Sergey Lavrov warns Georgia against use of force in resolving the Abkhaz and South Osetian conflicts. Transport Minister Igor Levitin says the restoration of a rail link between Sochi and Sukhumi "should not lead to a worsening of relations between Russia and Georgia".

The secretary of the Security Council, Igor Ivanov, gives an interview on Russian security policy particularly focusing on relations with key CIS partners. It appears on the Security Council website ([www.scrf.gov.ru](http://www.scrf.gov.ru)).

**1 November 2004** The MFA condemns the recent suicide bombing in Tel Aviv.

**1 November 2004** Vladimir Putin sends a message to Iranian president Mohammad Khatami, responding to the latter's expression of sympathy following the terrorist attacks in Russia. He emphasises the importance of the Russian draft of an international convention on combating acts of nuclear terrorism being adopted during the current session of the UN General Assembly.

**1 November 2004** Vladimir Putin and British Prime Minister Tony Blair have a telephone conversation.

**1 November 2004** The secretary of the Security Council, Igor Ivanov, thinks that the statehood of Belarus will not be adversely affected by the introduction of a single currency with Russia.

**2 November 2004** Ali Akbar Soltani, deputy director-general for political and international affairs of the Iranian Foreign Ministry says in Moscow that Tehran may revise its plans to create a nuclear fuel cycle on condition that Russia guarantees deliveries of fuel for the Bushehr nuclear power plant.

**2 November 2004** The secretary of Yedinaya Rossiya's General Council and first deputy head of its Duma faction, Valeriy Bogomolov, says that given the present level of relations with Japan, the Party feels it is premature to discuss a settlement of the problem of ownership of the South Kurils through a border delimitation, as happened with China. Bogomolov meets Japanese Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura in Tokyo. In 2003 Russia's trade with Japan amounted to only about 6bn dollars, which is 22 times less than Japan's trade with China.

**2 November 2004** The head of the Duma committee for CIS affairs and ties with compatriots, Andrey Kokoshin, says that despite a large number of irregularities, "there are enough grounds to believe that the first round of the presidential elections in Ukraine on 31 October was legal".

**2 November 2004** The headquarters of the Joint Peacekeeping Forces in South Osetia says armed Georgian policemen have detained and beaten up three Russian peacekeepers in the area of the Georgian-Osetian conflict without any reason.

Georgian parliamentary speaker Nino Burjanadze says the presence of Russian military bases in Georgia does not facilitate the improvement of relations between Moscow and Tbilisi. She calls for the creation of a joint antiterrorist centre instead. She says Georgia may withdraw from the CIS, and that Abkhazia and South Osetia are bones of contention in the Russo-Georgian relationship.

**3 November 2004** Security Council Secretary Igor Ivanov speaks at a round table meeting on the issue of preparing a new national security blueprint. "The development of a national security blueprint should promote strategic decision taking in the state administration which meets modern realities and which is aimed at increasing the country's competitive potential ... Experience in state construction in all spheres of ensuring national security, and moreover not only ours, but also abroad, shows that forming a rigid structure for long-term strategic planning is not only an essential, but also an obligatory condition for successful implementation of political decisions and is a guarantee of the country's steady development ... Since the time that the USSR ceased to exist, we have lost the very institution of national future planning and the methodology for integrated and mutually connected planning of strategy for the country's development has ceased to exist." He says the new security blueprint should be ready by mid-2005. This document should determine priorities for 10 to 15 years.

**3 November 2004** Transport Minister Igor Levitin says Moscow is planning to restore transport links with the Caucasus. Russia, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan are planning to create an operating company for the revival of the Transcaucasus Railway. Such a decision was taken following negotiations with the authorities of the three Transcaucasian republics.

**3 November 2004** Abkhaz presidential candidates Raul Khadzhimba and Sergey Bagapsh return from Moscow after consultations to find a way out of crisis after the recent election had been deemed invalid. Earlier Abkhazia's incumbent leader Vladislav Ardzinba issued a decree to hold a fresh election. Moscow suggests a rerun of the election. This is rejected by Bagapsh who claims he won the election.

**3 November 2004** Vladimir Putin welcomes the re-election of US President George Bush.

Putin expresses his support for the newly elected president of Afghanistan, Hamed Karzai.

**3 November 2004** Deputy Chairman of the Duma Dmitriy Rogozin says that irrespective of the US election results, Russia should maintain calm and balanced relations with the USA. "The choice between the Republicans and Democrats for Russia is like a choice between a hurricane and a typhoon."

Rogozin says Bush will continue the policy which he pursued during his first presidential term. He says this will include "the maintenance of instability in the Persian Gulf and threat of the use of force against Iran and Syria".

Valeriy Draganov, chairman of the Duma Committee on Economic Policy and Business, says that Bush is more beneficial for Russia. "The USA as the main player in the maintenance of the international order should be predictable and with Bush, the USA will be more predictable."

Konstantin Kosachev, the chairman of the Duma international affairs committee, says that Bush's re-election is more convenient for Russia. "Predictability, good personal contacts at the top and a normal working atmosphere that has developed in our relations speak in favour of a very probable progress in Russia's strategic partnership with the USA."

**4 November 2004** Two ships of the Black Sea Fleet leave Sevastopol and head for the Mediterranean to take part in NATO's operation Active Endeavour. This operation was launched after the terrorist attacks against the USA in 2001. Its mission then was to control navigation in the Gibraltar Straits and Suez Canal. In March 2004, the zone of the operation was extended to the entire Mediterranean.

**4 November 2004** Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov has talks with his Greek opposite number, Spilios Spiliotopoulos. He says nationals of 52 states had been eliminated as terrorists in the North Caucasus by Defence Ministry units.

**5 November 2004** Vladimir Putin signs the federal law "On the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change". The law was passed by the Russian State Duma on 22 October and approved by the Federation Council on 27 October.

**5 November 2004** Collective Security Treaty Organization Secretary-General Nikolay Bordyuzha says the CSTO is setting up a commission to promote arms trading and military cooperation.

**5 November 2004** Residents of Tarabarov Island and the island of Bolshoy Ussuriysk protest over the transfer of their islands to China.

**6 November 2004** Russia, Bulgaria and Greece initial a memorandum on the financial basis for the Burgas-Alexandroupolis oil pipeline project.

**6 November 2004** Vladimir Putin signs the federal law "On ratification of the protocol to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the Russian Federation, of the one part, and the European communities and their member states, of the other part, to take account of the accession of the Czech Republic, the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Cyprus, the Republic of Latvia, the Republic of Lithuania, the Republic of Hungary, the Republic of Malta, the Republic of Poland, the Republic of Slovenia, and the Slovak Republic to the European Union".

**6 November 2004** The MFA welcomes the 5 November accord between Georgian Prime Minister Zurab Zhvania and leader of the unrecognized republic of South Osetia Eduard Kokoit. All illegal armed formations are being pulled out of the Georgian-Osetian conflict zone by 20 November. The accord was signed in Sochi with the participation of Russian Federation First Deputy Foreign Minister Valeriy Loshchinin.

**6 November 2004** Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov says Russia is prepared to write off a significant part of Iraq's debt and hold talks on this issue with Baghdad. He says negotiations with Iraq on this have not yet started.

**8 November 2004** Sergey Lavrov gives an interview on US-Russian relations following US President George Bush's re-election:

[Lavrov] More specific and more practical actions are needed as far as terrorism is concerned, that is beyond doubt. It is a matter, first and foremost, of uncovering and eliminating terrorist cells. Here, first and foremost, we must pinpoint and eliminate terrorist cells. This requires the most intensive contacts between numerous departments and services. This means blocking the channels by which terrorism is funded. This, of course, entails the ending of double standards in this sphere.

But bilateral relations are an entire set of highly specific projects aimed, first and foremost, at intensification of our hi-tech cooperation, including space, of course, and investment cooperation, especially in the sphere of energy. The energy dialogue between Russia and the USA takes up an ever more important place in our relations.

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[Interviewer] Sergey Viktorovich, are there problems in relations between Moscow and Washington which at the present time are insoluble, in other words ones on which compromise cannot be reached?

[Lavrov] I think there are no such problems. There are problems on which our countries diverge, as far as their approaches towards their solution is concerned, but the assessment of the threats and risks present in the world right now and which Russia and the United States are facing is practically identical.

[Interviewer] Why is the economy one of the weakest aspects of relations between Moscow and Washington? What is the reason for that?

[Lavrov] I do not believe this is one of the weakest links. A dialogue on these questions is in progress, and not just in words - it is developing and is being turned into practical projects. I have already mentioned the energy sphere. The USA is the biggest, absolutely the biggest investor in the Russian economy. I think that here we are observing a period in which the accumulation of positive potential for tempestuous growth of economic cooperation is, right now, drawing to a close and we will witness major changes.

**9 November 2004** Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has talks with OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Rolf Ekeus in Moscow.

**9 November 2004** The Russian president's special envoy for collaboration in fighting terrorism and transnational organized crime, Anatoliy Safonov, says Russia views the fight against terrorism as "an important cornerstone for cooperation within the Russia-EU format, as an important component in creating a single Russia-EU space in the sphere of domestic and international security".

**9 November 2004** Presidential special envoy for relations with the European Union, Sergey Yastrzhembskiy, says the position of Russian-speaking non-citizens of Estonia and Latvia does not meet European standards.

**9 November 2004** MFA spokesman Aleksandr Yakovenko says the Russian-Iranian protocol under which Iran will return spent nuclear fuel to Russia is nearly drafted and will be signed shortly.

**9-11 November 2004** Consultations between the Russian and Macedonian foreign ministries take place in Moscow, attended by Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Chizhov and the state secretary at the Macedonian Foreign Ministry, Fatmir Xheladini.

**9 November 2004** MFA spokesman Aleksandr Yakovenko speaks on how to escape from the crisis over North Korea's nuclear programme. "It is currently important not to allow any slip backwards from the level of mutual understanding already reached at the meetings that have been held ... we're hoping that our Chinese

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counterparts, who are hosting the six-party talks, will soon be able to agree a new date for holding the talks with the other participants in the meeting ... there has been a slowing up in the talks process but, nevertheless, none of the sides have spoken in favour of discontinuing the dialogue."

**10 November 2004** MFA spokesman Aleksandr Yakovenko gives an interview on the development of the CIS Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).

**10 November 2004** Vladimir Putin signs a federal law on the ratification of an agreement between Russia and Belarus on joint materiel supplies to the regional grouping of troops of the Russian armed forces and the armed forces of Belarus. The agreement was signed by the Russian and Belarusian governments in Moscow on 25 December 2002. The Russian law to this effect was ratified by the State Duma on 20 October and endorsed by the Federation Council on 27 October.

**10 November 2004** Black Sea Fleet warships, which left their base to join NATO's Active Endeavour antiterrorist operation, enter Syrian territorial waters and conduct exercises.

**11 November 2004** Vladimir Putin offers his condolences on the death of Yasir Arafat. Russian special envoy for Middle East, Aleksandr Kalugin says the international community should increase efforts for a Middle East settlement following Arafat's death.

**11 November 2004** Kyrgyz President Askar Akayev visits Moscow for talks with Vladimir Putin.

**11 November 2004** Deputy Prime Minister Aleksandr Zhukov says the Russian government has endorsed an accord between Russia and Kazakhstan on joint planning to use troops in the interests of ensuring the joint security of the two countries. The accord will be submitted to the president for further ratification by the Duma.

**12 November 2004** Duma speaker Boris Gryzlov attends the funeral ceremony for Yasir Arafat in Cairo.

**12 November 2004** Vladimir Putin visits Ukraine for talks with President Leonid Kuchma and Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich. He wishes Yanukovich well in the second round of the Ukrainian presidential election.

**12 November 2004** Russian border guards begin to transfer the Pamir section of the state Afghan-Tajik border to Tajik border guards.

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**12 November 2004** The MFA says Russia "will be compelled to act to protect its interests" if the situation in Abkhazia deteriorates further.

**12 November 2004** Foreign Ministers of the CSTO meet in Moscow. The organization comprises Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

**12 November 2004** The MFA issues a statement on the Abkhaz situation.

**14 November 2004** Kyrgyz President Askar Akayev visits Moscow.

**14 November 2004** A high-ranking Serbian delegation headed by Serbian Patriarch Pavle and President of Serbia Boris Tadic arrives in Moscow.

**14 November 2004** Sergey Lavrov gives a wide-ranging TV interview on Russian foreign policy.

**15 November 2004** The Russian ambassador (Nikolay Sadchikov) expresses his concern to the Swedish Foreign Ministry about the opening of the Chechen separatist web site Kavkaz-Tsentr in Sweden.

**15 November 2004** Deputies of the Sakhalin Duma demand that Moscow refuse to conclude any kind of peace treaty with Japan which could entail territorial concessions on the part of Russia.

**15 November 2004** The 12th session of the Russian-French Economic, Financial, Industrial and Commercial Council (CEFIC) takes place in Paris. Energy cooperation is one of the main topics of discussion.

**15 November 2004** Col-Gen Yuriy Baluyevskiy, the chief of General Staff of the armed forces, visits NATO's European strategic headquarters in Belgium.

**16 November 2004** Sergey Lavrov says Moscow is not pleased at the continued operation of Chechen separatist website Kavkaz-Tsentr, which is now hosted in Sweden.

**16 November 2004** Georgia claims a Russian helicopter has illegally entered Georgian airspace from the direction of Dagestan. This is denied by the Russian air force.

**16 November 2004** Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov addresses a conference in Moscow on Democracy, Global Governance and World Order. He says eliminating double standards is one of the keys to resolving the problem of terrorism.

**16 November 2004** The chairman of the Federation Council international affairs committee, Mikhail Margelov, says a change in the US administration would not bring any serious shifts in Russia-US relations. He also says: "At the same time, issues such as the transit of Caspian oil, integration of the post-Soviet states into NATO, US competing with Russia in the CIS countries and Russian participation in Iran's nuclear program will bring a certain edge to these relations' agenda."

The chairman of the Duma international affairs committee Konstantin Kosachev says the departure of Colin Powell from the post of US secretary of state will not seriously affect the USA's foreign policy. He also says it is possible that Powell's departure and Rice's appointment to the post might increase radicalism in the new US Administration's foreign policy.

**16 November 2004** Sergey Lavrov says methods that put an end to violence in Iraq "should remain strictly within the framework of international law". He says Russia has no plans to supply arms to Iraq but is prepared to do so, if the Iraqi government makes such a request. Chief of the General Staff Col-Gen Yuriy Baluyevskiy says he has discussed this with the NATO supreme allied commander in Europe, Gen James Jones. He says Russian arms are more appropriate for Iraq.

**16 November 2004** Director of the Institute of Political and Military Analysis Aleksandr Sharavin discusses Russian policy in the Middle East in an interview with Russian Radio.

**16 November 2004** Duma chairman Boris Gryzlov says that it is not right for Russia to be formally in a state of war with Japan.

**16 November 2004** Chief of the General Staff Col-Gen Yuriy Baluyevskiy, says he would like to see a military intelligence representative based at NATO. He attends a chief-of-staff session of the Russia-NATO Council. Baluyevskiy says that Russia is to form a special peacekeeping force by 1 February 2005.

**16 November 2004** Spanish Defence Minister Jose Bono visits Russia for talks with his Russian counterpart Sergey Ivanov.

**16 November 2004** Serbian President Boris Tadic says the presence of Russian peacekeepers in Kosovo-Metohija would benefit the region. He says he has not discussed this with the Russian leadership.

**16 November 2004** Head of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Alcee Hastings visits Moscow for talks with Sergey Lavrov.

**17 November 2004** Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says that there are up to 200 foreign mercenaries in Chechnya.

**17 November 2004** MFA special envoy and ambassador-at-large Aleksandr Kalugin says Russian diplomacy will not stay away from "changes and processes in the Palestinian National Authority". "There will be contacts at a high diplomatic level in the immediate future both with Palestinian and Israeli envoys ... the road map is a document which clearly specifies landmarks for a peace settlement ... The main thing is to create a Palestinian state which will live side by side with Israel in peace. Any new programmes in this context will be counterproductive."

**17 November 2004** Jonas Janulionis, technical director of the Lietuvos Dujos national operator of gas networks, says Lithuania will build a new 63-km-long gas pipeline on its territory to Kaliningrad Region. The construction of the gas pipeline branch will begin in January 2005. The Ruhrgas German concern owns 38.9% of the Lithuanian company's shares, Gazprom 37.1% and Lithuania's State Property Fund 17.7%.

**18 November 2004** Vladimir Putin says that Russia could pay its debts to the IMF and the Paris Club of creditors ahead of schedule. Putin meets in Moscow with IMF Managing Director Rodrigo de Rato.

**18 November 2004** Natural Resources Minister Yuriy Trutnev visits South Africa for talks with South African Deputy Minister of Minerals and Energy Lula Xingwana. He says Russia is ready to cooperate with South Africa in the exploration of hydrocarbon deposits and uncut diamond deposits.

**18 November 2004** The MFA says it "welcomes the approval of the new European Commission by the European Parliament".

**18 November 2004** The MFA says it expects the Swedish authorities to take action to put a stop to the activities of the Kavkaz-Tsentr Chechen separatist web site in that country.

**19 November 2004** Vladimir Putin's special representative on issues of international cooperation in the fight against terrorism, Anatoliy Safonov, is interviewed on fighting terrorism.

**19 November 2004** Sergey Lavrov meets US State Secretary Colin Powell at the APEC summit. They discuss Iran and Iraq.

**19 November 2004** Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov says Iraqi elections should take place in January 2005. He says it would be premature to discuss selling Russian arms and sending Russian military specialists to Iraq.

**19 November 2004** Internal Affairs Minister Rashid Nurgaliyev meets Kazakh Internal Affairs Minister Zautbek Turisbekov to discuss border cooperation.

**19 November 2004** The Azerbaijani Border Service states that the border services of Azerbaijan and Russia are conducting a joint operation on the Azerbaijani-Russian border to detain people illegally crossing the border and to block illegal passes.

**19 November 2004** Russian Duma speaker Boris Gryzlov visits Ukraine. He says regardless of the results of the second round of the Ukrainian presidential elections being held on Sunday 21 November, Ukraine "must be a united and powerful state" and Russia and Ukraine must be "good, friendly neighbours".

**20 November 2004** Protests take place in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk about the possibility of transferring the southern Kuril Islands to Japan.

**20 November 2004** Vladimir Putin visits Chile to attend the APEC summit. He meets US President George Bush there.

Putin and Chilean President Ricardo Lagos sign a joint statement following bilateral talks in Santiago.

**20 November 2004** Russia and South Korea sign a protocol on completing negotiations on Russia joining the World Trade Organisation. It is signed in Santiago at the APEC summit.

**20 November 2004** The Menatep group, the chief shareholder in the Yukos oil company, starts court proceedings against the Russian Federation under the Energy Charter. The group's managing director, Tim Osborne states: "We started proceedings under the Energy Charter after the Yuganskneftegaz sale was announced. What we are talking about here is the expropriation of our property, and we intend to defend it with all legal methods at our disposal."

**20 November 2004** The MFA issues a statement on Sudan. It says that Russia will continue to actively promote the long-term and irreversible normalization of the situation in Sudan.

**20 November 2004** The Russian air force denies Estonian claims that a Russian An-72 transport aircraft has violated its airspace in the area of the island of Vaindlo.

**21 November 2004** Vladimir Putin is interviewed in Brazilian newspapers *Folha de S.Paulo* and *O Globo*. He says plans to change the system of Duma and gubernatorial elections are pre-emptive measures directed against those whose goal is to shake Russia's statehood.

Vladimir Putin meets Chinese and Japanese leaders in Chile.

**21 November 2004** The Paris Club decides to write off 80% of Iraq's debt.

**21 November 2004** Vladimir Putin says the Palestinian Authority should carry out democratic reforms after the death of its leader Yasir Arafat.

**21 November 2004** Russia and South Africa sign an agreement on cooperation in the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes.

**22 November 2004** Vladimir Putin issues a decree appointing presidential aide Dzhakhan Pollyyeva his special representative on issues of humanitarian cooperation with CIS countries.

**22 November 2004** Vladimir Putin, currently visiting Brazil, telephones Ukrainian Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich and congratulates him on his victory in the Ukrainian presidential election.

Duma speaker Boris Gryzlov says the violations reported during the second round of the Ukrainian presidential elections "cannot have any fundamental effect on the results ... the reported violations cannot be used as an argument in favour of changing the result of the vote".

**22 November 2004** The MFA welcomes Iran's decision to halt uranium enrichment.

**22 November 2004** Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Chizhov says Russia stands for "maintaining the five-party format at the Dniester settlement talks". Russia, Ukraine and the OSCE are taking part in the talks along with Chisinau and Tiraspol.

**22 November 2004** The MFA says Russia hopes to reach mutually acceptable agreements in signing a framework treaty with Georgia. MFA spokesman Aleksandr Yakovenko says: "However, we are further from the final stage than we would like to be."

**23 November 2004** Vladimir Putin, in Portugal, makes a further statement on the Ukrainian elections: "We can neither recognize nor reject the results of the elections in Ukraine, because they have not yet been officially announced. Everything must remain within the law. I did indeed congratulate one of the participants in the presidential race, going by the results of exit polls. But only the Ukrainian Central Electoral Commission can take the final decision. I am familiar with the statement made by the EU foreign ministers. I paid particular attention to the last point in this statement, which calls on all sides in the Ukrainian presidential race not to allow any violence. I fully associate myself with this position and add that

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everybody must stay within the law." He criticises the OSCE for casting doubt on the legitimacy of the Ukrainian elections, plus statement made by EU foreign ministers on the elections.

The MFA issues a statement saying the Ukrainian presidential elections were held in keeping with Ukraine's legislation and were free and legitimate. It expresses regret at demands by the Ukrainian opposition to annul the voting results. "Radicals in Ukraine and outside it must understand that the whipping up of tension and calls for use of force can extremely exacerbate the situation and lead to grave consequences. All political forces, and first and foremost the opposition must show restraint, state wisdom, responsibility towards their people, recognize the will of the people expressed during the elections and immediately stop anticonstitutional calls and actions."

Sergey Lavrov says Russia does not interfere in the internal affairs of other states, including Ukraine. He rejects calls for a rose revolution in Ukraine.

Andrey Kokoshin, chairman of the Duma Committee on CIS Affairs, says that Ukraine is on the verge of a split. He praises Viktor Yanukovich.

The headquarters of the Interior Ministry Troops denies reports that have appeared in some media of its units being deployed to Ukraine.

**23 November 2004** Sergey Lavrov says the international quartet on the Middle East has backed providing necessary support for preparing the Palestinian elections. He visits Ramallah for talks with the Palestinian leadership.

Sergey Lavrov attends an international conference on Iraq in Sharm al-Shaykh (Egypt). He has bilateral talks with UK Foreign Secretary Jack Straw.

**23 November 2004** The seventh session of the EU-Russia Parliamentary Cooperation Committee takes place in Brussels. Members of the Russian and European parliaments agree to set up a working group for the promotion of cooperation between Russia and the European Union in specific areas. Working groups will be set up to monitor issues of social and economic development in Kaliningrad Region and those of transit in and out of the region, as well as border problems and issues linked to the protection of rights of the Russian speaking population in the Baltic states.

**23 November 2004** The MFA begins a series of consultations with the foreign ministries of CIS member countries on the issue of commonwealth reform.

**23 November 2004** The Duma unanimously ratifies a protocol on amendments to the treaty between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Armenia on a Russian military base in Armenia. The protocol was signed in Yerevan on 11 November 2003.

**23 November 2004** CSTO Secretary-General Nikolay Bordyuzha says the CSTO is working out a concept of deploying a large military force in Central Asia. It will

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combine units of armed forces of the CSTO member nations, namely Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Their strength may total about 10,000.

**24 November 2004** Finance Minister Aleksey Kudrin says Russia expects to come to a "mutual understanding" with the members of the Paris Club of creditors during talks on Russia's debt to the club as Russia supported the decision to write off 80% of Iraq's debt to the Paris Club. Russia owed 40.9bn dollars to the Paris Club as of 30 June. Iraq's debt to Russia, including interest, was about 8.899bn dollars as of 1 January.

**24 November 2004** First deputy speaker of the Duma, Lyubov Sliska, criticises Ukrainian presidential candidate Viktor Yushchenko for proclaiming himself president.

The Duma issues a statement on the situation in Ukraine. It says it believes that the results of the Ukrainian presidential elections are valid.

Finance Minister Aleksey Kudrin says escalation of the political crisis in Ukraine may have a negative impact on Russian-Ukrainian economic relations.

**24 November 2004** Sergey Lavrov has talks in Jerusalem with the Israeli leadership and in Ramallah with the Palestinian leadership.

Sergey Lavrov says Russia is ready to discuss the situation in Ukraine at the European Union summit but believes the EU should pay attention to more acute problems such as a Cyprus settlement and Kosovo.

**25 November 2004** Vladimir Putin attends the Russia-EU summit in the Hague. He says that the central theme of the summit had been the formation of four common Russia-EU spaces concerning the law, freedom, security and jurisprudence; the economy; scientific research and culture. He says that Russia and the EU had made considerable progress in developing four common spaces. He says the drafting of joint working plans must be completed by the next summit in Moscow to be held in May 2005. He says: "It is important to have common European objectives to deal with priority tasks like fighting global and regional threats. Over the past few months Russian departments and the European Commission have made remarkable progress on agreeing working plans in each of these spaces. The road map for two of these spaces is practically ready. We expect this work to be fully completed for the next summit in Moscow, which will be in May 2005."

**25 November 2004** Vladimir Putin says that all disputed issues over the Ukrainian elections should be resolved in the framework of the Ukrainian constitution. "During the final count of the votes, representatives of the opposition election headquarters, representatives of Mr Viktor Yushchenko's headquarters - as far as I know - signed all the documents, which made it possible for the Ukrainian Central Electoral Commission to reach the conclusion that Mr Viktor Yanukovych had won. ... I don't think that Russia is being passive, just as I do not think that Ukraine's election results should be either recognized or not recognized by one state or

another. It is up to the Ukrainian people. These elections need no external recognition. Although, of course, we all understand that Ukraine is situated in the centre of Europe and it should, and I am confident that it will build normal, friendly relations with all its neighbours. At the very beginning of the presidential race in Ukraine I said that we are ready to work with any president who will be elected by the Ukrainian people. We do not think we have the right to intervene in the electoral process in any way and to impose our view on the Ukrainian people."

Lyubov Sliska, first deputy speaker of the Duma, says the EU should not interfere in the internal affairs of Ukraine.

Chairman of the Duma international affairs committee Konstantin Kosachev says the present situation in Ukraine "is simply being used by the West to force through its preferred candidate, namely Viktor Yushchenko".

**25 November 2004** The president of Venezuela, Hugo Chavez, arrives in Moscow on a two-day official visit.

**25 November 2004** Vladimir Putin says Russia will write off over 90% of the Iraqi debt.

**25 November 2004** Vladimir Putin says he welcomes Iran's statement on freezing its uranium enrichment programmes.

**26 November 2004** Sergey Lavrov says "The attempts by several states to move the situation beyond the realm of Ukrainian law put us on our guard ... even more so when some European capitals first say they do not recognize the elections and their next thesis is that Ukraine should be with the West."

The MFA says that Russia will not oppose a vote recount or a rerun of the election in Ukraine.

**26 November 2004** Swiss Foreign Minister Micheline Calmy-Rey visits Moscow.

**26 November 2004** The joint Russian-NATO naval exercises codenamed PASSEX are successfully completed in the Mediterranean.

**27 November 2004** The Duma speaker, Boris Gryzlov, says the announcement by Ukraine's Central Electoral Commission that Viktor Yanukovich was the victor in presidential elections corresponds to legal norms.

Vladimir Putin's aide for relations with the European Union Sergey Yastrzhembskiy says certain forces in the West are trying to convince citizens of the post-Soviet republics that serious constitutional questions can be resolved by "street democracy". Yastrzhembskiy also states that the European Union's attitude towards Russia is changing because of the 10 newcomers from Eastern Europe, which "bear a huge grudge" against Russia and are now setting their own agenda.

**28 November 2004** A Russian parliamentary delegation visits Saudi Arabia.

**29 November 2004** Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov says Russia is calling for "increased international mediation in the settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict".

**29 November 2004** Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov visits Egypt for talks. He signs a free trade agreement. Talks between the two sides have covered several cooperation aspects, including trade exchange and investments as well as joint ventures between businessmen from both countries in tourism, agriculture, oil, natural gas and energy domains. A use of civilian nuclear agreement is also signed.

**29 November 2004** The Dalai Lama arrives in Elista (the capital of the Kalmyk republic).

**29 November 2004** Sergey Lavrov signs a document in Laos on Russia's accession to the Treaty on Friendship and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (the Bali treaty). At the same time, the foreign ministers of the ten ASEAN states sign a document on the enlargement of the Bali treaty.

**29 November 2004** Sergey Lavrov says Russia favours "holding a fresh round of six-party talks on the settlement of the North Korean nuclear issue at the end of this year or the beginning of next year". Lavrov has had talks in Laos with Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing. Lavrov discusses ASEAN-SCO cooperation at the ASEAN summit.

**29 November 2004** The MFA says the situation in Ukraine should be resolved within the framework of the country's current constitution and law.

**29 November 2004** Chairman of the Duma international affairs committee, Konstantin Kosachev, says the absence of progress in relations with Baltic countries after their joining the EU and NATO causes disappointment in Moscow.

**29 November 2004** Vladimir Putin sends a message to Saudi Crown Prince Abdallah Bin-Abd-al-Aziz Al Saud. The message was delivered by Federation Council member and coordinator of the Federation Council's Russian-Arab interparliamentary association Ramazan Abdulatipov, who is now in Saudi Arabia.

**30 November 2004** Vladimir Putin speaks on the telephone with German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder. He says a solution to the crisis in Ukraine must be found by democratic means, without external or internal pressure.

Sergey Lavrov says nobody is interested in splitting Ukraine and only the Ukrainian people are entitled to decide their fate.

Deputy Foreign Minister Valeriy Loshchinin is interviewed in *Ekonomika I Zhizn*. He discusses Russo-Ukrainian economic relations.

Duma speaker Boris Gрызлов says the Ukrainian opposition has broken agreements which were reached during last week's first round table discussion among representatives of Russia, the European Union and the presidents of Lithuania and Poland. He says Viktor Yushchenko "should have called on people to leave the streets". Gрызлов says the situation in Ukraine is heading "either towards a split in the country or bloodshed".

**30 November 2004** The MFA says Russia hopes that "Iran will continue the policy of constructive cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)".

**30 November 2004** Sergey Lavrov has talks with his Chinese counterpart, Li Zhaoxing, in Laos. He says Moscow anticipates that the fourth round of the six-sided talks on the North Korean nuclear problem will take place, if not before the end of this year, then at the start of next.

## **December**

**1 December 2004** President Vladimir Putin has a telephone conversation with the Dutch Prime Minister and current EU chairman, Jan Peter Balkenende. They discuss Ukraine.

Sergey Lavrov says Russia could mediate in resolving the situation in Ukraine. He warns against involvement by Central European politicians in the crisis.

Duma chairman Boris Gрызлов visits Kiev. He will be taking part in talks with Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma, EU high representative for common foreign and security policy Javier Solana and OSCE Secretary-General Jan Kubis on settling the situation in Ukraine.

Yevgeniy Primakov, chairman of the chamber of commerce and industry and former prime minister of Russia, thinks that the West is behind events in Ukraine.

**1 December 2004** Gennadiy Bukayev, an aide to the Russian prime minister says the Russian leadership supports the actions of the legitimate president of Abkhazia, Vladislav Ardzinba, to stabilize the sociopolitical situation in the republic. He says "because of rising tension in Abkhazia, the state border has been put on heightened alert in that sector, including the sea border, and from 2 December the rail link between Moscow and Sukhumi will be suspended". He criticises the action of the supporters of Sergey Bagapsh.

**1 December 2004** The Russian flag is lowered in the Khorugh frontier post at an official ceremony. The border detachment is transferred to the State Border Protection Committee under the Tajik government.

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**1 December 2004** Mohammad Reza Aref, who is Iran's first deputy vice-president and chairman of the Iranian office for trade and economic relations, visits Russia. He says Iran wants more intensive cooperation with Russia on the Venus-Mars satellite and the Bushehr nuclear power plant projects.

**1 December 2004** Sergey Lavrov visits India. He says Russia and India are "concerned about the attempts to Pashtonize Afghanistan".

**1 December 2004** The MFA says Moscow believes that the campaign around alleged violations within the UN Oil-For Food programme aims at discrediting the UN.

**2 December 2004** Anatoliy Safonov, the Russian president's special representative for the fight against terrorism and transnational crime, says cooperation between Moscow and Ankara in the fight against terrorism is an "important item on the regular Russian-Turkish agenda."

**2 December 2004** Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma meet in Moscow to discuss Russo-Ukrainian relations.

**2 December 2004** The government's plenipotentiary representative at the Duma, Andrey Loginov, says the situation in Abkhazia has sharply deteriorated.

**2 December 2004** The Russian and Indian defence ministers sign three defence protocols in New Delhi.

Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says Russia sells virtually no arms to Pakistan at India's request.

**3 December 2004** The MFA describes the European Parliament resolution of 2 December on Ukraine as interference in that country's internal affairs.

The Duma passes a motion blaming external forces for attempting to destabilise the situation in Ukraine.

The Duma welcomes the Ukrainian Supreme Council's proposal to withdraw Ukrainian peacekeepers from Iraq as a "positive step".

Boris Nemtsov of the URF welcomes the Ukrainian Supreme Court ruling on holding a repeat of the second round of the presidential elections.

Duma deputy speaker Vladimir Pekhtin says the decision of the Ukrainian Supreme Court is "unconstitutional".

**3 December 2004** Vladimir Putin begins his visit to India.

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Vladimir Putin and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh adopt a joint declaration.

Putin speaks in India of the importance of establishing cooperation in the format Russia-India-China.

The head of Gazprom, Aleksey Miller, and the head of the Gas Authority of India Ltd, Proshanto Banerjee, sign an agreement on strategic cooperation.

**3 December 2004** An energy summit of six North East Asian countries is held in Khabarovsk. The Khabarovsk Territory government is one of the organizers of the forum, which was held under the aegis of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP). It says Russia can satisfy the fuel and energy needs of the Asia-Pacific region countries. Oil reserves in the Asian part of Russia are estimated at 13bn-14bn tonnes, and gas reserves at 44,000bn-46,000bn cu.m.

**3 December 2004** A delegation led by Moscow mayor Yury Luzhkov visits Armenia.

**3 December 2004** CSTO Secretary-General Nikolay Bordyuzha says there are currently 22 organizations on the list of terrorist and extremist groups which pose a threat to the states of the CSTO.

**4 December 2004** The speaker of the Duma, Boris Gryzlov, says the paths of the European Union and Moscow could diverge over Ukraine.

**4 December 2004** The 24th plenary session of the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly takes place in St Petersburg with the adoption of 13 model laws and three resolutions.

**4 December 2004** Vladimir Putin says that any new permanent members of the UN Security Council should have veto rights.

**4 December 2004** Deputy Prosecutor-General Vladimir Kolesnikov proposes that Abkhazia should adopt a new electoral law and hold a repeat presidential election in January 2005.

**5 December 2004** The withdrawal of the grouping of Russian Federation airborne troops from Chechnya ends. A total of 1,500 airborne troops have been dispatched to their places of permanent deployment.

**5 December 2004** Vladimir Putin arrives in Turkey for a two-day visit.

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**5 December 2004** Russian border forces hand over to Tajik border forces the Qala-i Khum border region (Tajik-Afghan border).

**6 December 2004** Iraqi Prime Minister Iyad Allawi visits Moscow for talks.

**6 December 2004** Vladimir Putin and Turkish President Ahmet Necdet Sezer sign a joint declaration on deepening friendship and multi-level partnership between the Russian Federation and Turkey. They also sign energy cooperation agreements.

Gazprom and BOTAS (Turkey) sign an agreement.

**6 December 2004** Interior Minister Rashid Nurgaliyev and FBI Director at the US Department of Justice Robert Mueller discuss bilateral cooperation in Moscow. The FSB and FBI sign a memorandum on cooperation in the fight against international terrorism.

**6 December 2004** Vladimir Putin says that Russia is ready to accept any choice by the Ukrainian people. He says on Ukraine:

You know, democracy in the modern world is an absolute asset. But it is a complicated thing. It includes, among other things, the possibility of passing and implementing democratic laws. Without this component, there can be no democracy.

If we allow in the post-Soviet space every time on any excuse existing legislation to be adjusted to suit one situation or another, one political force or another, this will not lead to stability. On the contrary, it will destabilize this big and very important region of the world. That is what I regard as absolutely unacceptable and unconstructive and, indeed, counterproductive.

I would like to stress yet again that we proceed from the premise that it is only the people themselves in any country, and of course this applies in full measure to Ukraine, that can decide their future. One can be a mediator but under no circumstances can one interfere and exert pressure. This is the premise we shall proceed from.

**6 December 2004** The OSCE Foreign Ministers Meeting takes place in Sofia. In an interview in the Bulgarian newspaper *24 Chasa*, Sergey Lavrov calls for reform of the OSCE.

**7 December 2004** Vladimir Putin meets in Moscow with Iraqi Prime Minister Iyad Allawi. Putin says that he expects Russian companies to be given a leading role in Iraqi reconstruction in return for Russia writing off 9bn dollars' worth of Iraq's debts.

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Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Saltanov says the governments of Russia and Iraq will in the very near future discuss the implementation of bilateral contracts signed during Saddam Hussein's rule.

**7 December 2004** Deputy foreign minister Aleksandr Saltanov says Russia believes there is no need for new initiatives to renew the Palestinian-Israeli talks process. "There is the road map for a Middle East settlement, adopted by the sides and approved by the international community as UN Security Council Resolution 1515". He says: At the quartet's 23 November ministerial meeting in Sharm el-Shaykh, the participants were able to agree a collective platform on the basis of the following key elements: support for a new and pragmatic Palestinian leadership, promoting the organization and holding of the election of a head of the authority, encouraging Israel to make goodwill gestures towards the Palestinians and encouraging the Palestinians to take active counterterrorist measures. On this basis Russia, in collaboration with its quartet partners, intends to work actively with the conflict parties to bring their positions closer together, restore negotiation contacts and eventually to resume a full peace process in the region." He says Russia is planning to send observers to the election of a Palestine National Authority head in January next year on the basis that "this will form part of the international monitoring of the vote, given the quartet's leading role".

**7 December 2004** Sergey Lavrov attends the OSCE foreign ministers' meeting in Sofia. He clashes with US Secretary of State Colin Powell over Ukraine. Lavrov also discusses OSCE reform with Powell. He also calls for greater anti-terrorist cooperation in the OSCE. He also discusses the situation in Georgia and Transdnestr.

**7 December 2004** Minister of Industry and Energy Viktor Khristenko meets Polish Deputy Prime Minister Jerzy Hausner. He says Russia and Poland intend to complete all work on the Yamal-Europe 1 gas pipeline in 2005.

**7 December 2004** Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Alekseyev attends the inauguration of Afghan President Hamed Karzai in Kabul. He states: "In my view, the USA unequivocally views [Afghanistan] - and not only Afghanistan - as a zone of its absolute, complete and all-consuming interests. What we realistically draw attention to, the area in which we really could help Afghanistan, relates to reconstruction of a string of important facilities which Afghanistan needs, ones which successfully operated, functioned, existed here when we had an alliance with Afghanistan, when we did indeed build a great deal here."

**8 December 2004** Russia reopens the Abkhaz section of its border with Georgia. The border was closed on 2 December.

**8 December 2004** Sergey Lavrov visits Albania, and initials a friendship and cooperation treaty.

Sergey Lavrov visits Macedonia.

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**8 December 2004** Greek prime minister Konstandinos Karamanlis visits Moscow for talks with Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov.

**9 December 2004** The MFA expresses concern about Akhmed Zakayev's stay in Norway at the beginning of December.

A UN delegation arrives in Chechnya to discuss issues relating to providing humanitarian aid to Chechnya and opening a UN mission in the republic.

Vladimir Putin's aide on Chechen affairs, Aslambek Aslakhanov, and the head of the FSB's antiterror unit, Yevgeniy Khaylov visit the USA where they have talks on terrorism with the executive director of the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED) of the United Nations, Javier Ruperez, and the commissioner of the New York police force, Raymond Kelly.

**9 December 2004** The Russian-Abkhaz border reopens.

**9 December 2004** The Russian sector of the Tajik-Afghan border is handed over to Tajikistan.

**9 December 2004** Sergey Lavrov meets Latvian foreign minister Artis Pabriks in Brussels.

**9 December 2004** Greek Prime Minister Konstandinos Karamanlis visits Moscow for talks with Vladimir Putin.

**9 December 2004** Sergey Lavrov attends a meeting of the Russia-NATO Council in Brussels. He praises NATO and criticises the OSCE.

**10 December 2004** Spanish Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero visits Moscow for talks with Vladimir Putin.

**10 December 2004** Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov visits France; several economic cooperation agreements are signed.

**10 December 2004** Sergey Yastrzhembskiy, the president's special representative for cooperation with the European Union, says he does not see any insoluble problems in relations between Russia and the EU. Yastrzhembskiy says that Russia supplies 20% of the oil demands and 30% of the gas demands of EU countries. Russia's share in fuel supplies to the European Union will increase.

**10 December 2004** Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says that everything possible needs to be done to ensure that North Korea's nuclear programme is confined within a civilian framework and within the nonproliferation regime. He says that

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North Korea's decision to withdraw from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty could significantly weaken the efforts of the world community to strengthen regimes for the nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

**10 December 2004** Sergey Ivanov suggests the establishment of a Russian-Georgian centre of cooperation against the terrorist threat. He says Russia will launch pre-emptive strikes against terrorists if necessary. He says the strength of the armed forces, with the integration of the Railway Troops into them, will be 1.207m service personnel and 876,000 civilians as of 1 January 2005.

**11 December 2004** United Energy Systems says Iran will be connected to the single energy grid shared by Russia, the CIS and Baltic states in 2006.

**11 December 2004** The Russian presidential aide on Chechen affairs, Aslambek Aslakhanov, has discussed Russian-US cooperation in combating terrorism with US Under-Secretary of State Richard Armitage in Moscow.

**11 December 2004** Chairman of the Federation Council Sergey Mironov visits Iran.

**12 December 2004** Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov visits China to discuss military cooperation. He will attend the 11th sitting of the joint intergovernmental commission for military and technical cooperation to draw up a long-term cooperation plan.

**13 December 2004** First Deputy Foreign Minister Valeriy Loshchinin outlines his views on Russo-Georgian relations in an interview.

**13 December 2004** Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov has said that the first Russian-Chinese joint military exercises are to be held on Chinese territory in 2005.

**14 December 2004** Chechen President Alu Alkhanov expresses dissatisfaction with the extent of cooperation that Georgia is offering Russia in guarding the Georgian-Chechen border.

**14 December 2004** Vladimir Putin and the prime minister of Luxembourg, Jean-Claude Juncker, have talks in Moscow as Luxembourg prepares to take over the chairmanship of the European Union.

**14 December 2004** Vladimir Putin has talks in St.Petersburg with the Finnish president Tarja Halonen. He calls for a relaxation of the Schengen regime for Russians.

**14 December 2004** Deputy Director of the Federal Service for Drugs Trade Control Aleksandr Fedorov says there are plans to set up a Central Asian regional information and coordination centre to step up the fight against the drug threat coming from Afghanistan.

**14 December 2004** The Russian-Iranian commission on trade and economic cooperation meets in Moscow. Rosatom head Aleksandr Rumyantsev heads the Russian side of this commission, while its co-chairman on the Iranian side is Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance Seyyed Safdar Hoseyni.

**15 December 2004** Duma Speaker Boris Gрызлов visits Armenia.

**15 December 2004** The Duma ratifies a cooperation treaty among the member states of the CIS in combating terrorism.

**15 December 2004** Duma defence committee chairman Col-Gen Viktor Zavarzin says most countries of the European Union "are apprehensive of the military and political rapprochement with Russia". He says that "this fact proves that EU leaders' statements are of a declarative nature and that the EU is not prepared for a fundamental change in existing relations". "The initiatives put forward by the European Union usually contain a number of conditions and restrictions for the Russian side". This "excludes the possibility for the Russian Federation to take part in the European military construction process on an equal footing and prevents the rate of cooperation with Russia from exceeding the rate of developing relations with NATO and the states that have been invited to join the EU." He notes that the EU rejected the draft project for expanding contacts in the military sphere.

**15 December 2004** Duma speaker Boris Gрызлов says that: "Russia did not champion any of the candidates in the presidential elections in Ukraine. I am stating that officially."

**15 December 2004** Black Sea Fleet warships have returned to their home base in Sevastopol from an exercise in the Mediterranean Sea with NATO navies.

**16 December 2004** The Moscow meeting of participants in the Central Asian memorandum on mutual understanding for regional cooperation in drug control sets up a regional information and coordination centre in Central Asia. It will be tasked with responding promptly to drug-related crimes. The Central Asian antidrugs memorandum was set up in 1996. Its participants are Russia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, the UN Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention and the Aga Khan Foundation.

**16 December 2004** Sergey Lavrov meets Polish foreign minister Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz in Moscow.

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Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov tells a sitting of the Committee on a Russian-Polish Cooperation Strategy that Russian-Polish cooperation is an important factor in building a system to ensure the security of European energy supplies.

**17 December 2004** Russia and Iran preliminarily agree to work on the second generating set of Bushehr atomic power station at the fifth sitting of the standing intergovernmental Russian-Iranian commission on trade and economic cooperation. Russia and Iran sign a cooperation protocol.

**17 December 2004** Sergey Lavrov attends a meeting of the council of the heads of the constituent parts of the Russian Federation under the Foreign Ministry. He says Russia "has interests on the territory of the CIS ... We proceed from the fact that our neighbours should respect our interests as we, for our part, respect the interests of these states ... Ukraine is a good friend and neighbour of ours, and our regions develop relations with Ukraine ... I cannot comment on NATO's views and utterances but want to note that at a conference of ambassadors Russian President Vladimir Putin said that Russia did not view the CIS territory as a monopoly to develop relations with these countries. These states are sovereign and are within their rights themselves to choose their partners."

Sergey Lavrov proposes the creation of an interdepartmental commission on Spitsbergen to safeguard Russia's interests in the region.

**18 December 2004** The MFA says that Russia "regards the independence of Taiwan as unacceptable in any form".

**20 December 2004** Vladimir Putin visits Germany for talks with German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder.

**20 December 2004** The chairman of the Duma international affairs committee, Konstantin Kosachev, says it is essential to ensure "the renewal of six-sided talks on settling the nuclear problem on the Korean peninsula as quickly as possible".

**21 December 2004** Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Alekseyev has talks with US ambassador in Moscow, Alexander Vershbow, on the Korean nuclear issue.

**21 December 2004** Gazprom states it has recently signed a memorandum on strategic partnership with the Chinese National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC).

**22 December 2004** The chairman of the Duma international affairs committee, Konstantin Kosachev says Russia is acting less and less like a global power in its foreign policy and more like a regional one.

Konstantin Kosachev says Russia and Japan remain in diametrically opposed positions with regard to solving the Kuriles dispute.

**22 December 2004** Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov says Russia is ready to accept help from the West in resolving social and economic problems in Chechnya.

**22 December 2004** Security Council Secretary Igor Ivanov and Belgian Foreign Minister Karel de Gucht have talks in Moscow.

**22 December 2004** The Duma ratifies the treaty on strategic cooperation between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Uzbekistan, signed in Tashkent on 16 June 2004.

**22 December 2004** Mikhail Dmitriyev, chief of the federal service for military and technical cooperation with foreign countries, says Russian arms exports for 2004 will come to no less than last year and amount to 5.6bn-5.7bn dollars.

**23 December 2004** The two citizens of the Russian Federation who were convicted in Qatar on a charge of involvement in the murder of the Chechen rebel envoy Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev return to Russia aboard a special flight. The Qatari Foreign Ministry says the two Russians were being handed over in accordance with a bilateral agreement signed by Qatar and Russia.

**23 December 2004** The special representative of the Russian foreign minister ambassador-at-large Aleksandr Kalugin has talks with the Palestinian leadership in Ramallah.

**23 December 2004** Russia's extraordinary and plenipotentiary ambassador in the OSCE Minsk Group Vladimir Kazimirov criticises the PACE report on Nagornyy Karabakh by David Atkinson.

**23 December 2004** Ukrainian Foreign Minister Kostyantyn Hryshchenko has talks in Moscow with Sergey Lavrov. He says Ukrainian membership of NATO would benefit Russia. They also discuss the Azov Sea and the Black Sea Fleet.

**24 December 2004** Vladimir Putin says that Russia will never conduct behind-the-scenes policies on the post-Soviet space.

**24 December 2004** Russian ambassador to Armenia, Anatoliy Dryukov, says "Russia has been, is and will be present in the Caucasus".

**24 December 2004** The head of Rosatom Aleksandr Rumyantsev says the first power generating unit of the Tianwan nuclear power plant in China, may be launched in February 2005.

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**24 December 2004** The CIS Council of Interior Ministers meets in Moscow. Representatives of the interior ministries of CIS member-states sign a plan for counteracting terrorism for 2005.

**25 December 2004** A Lukoil delegation arrives in Iraq for talks with the Iraqi oil ministry.

**27 December 2004** Interior Minister Rashid Nurgaliyev says the CIS interior ministers have adopted a 2005 action plan for the fight against terrorism.

**27 December 2004** Chairman of the Central Electoral Commission Aleksandr Veshnyakov says Russian observers have noted some irregularities during Ukraine's presidential elections on 26 December but do not doubt the overall result of the voting.

**27 December 2004** Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov says Russia and the USA "today have colossal potential for true cooperation in a vast number of areas". He says: "We are allies in fighting terrorism and associated dangers," and that Moscow and Washington "are developing a better dialogue in the military area". "Strategic stability as a whole, especially in the context of NATO expansion and the reconfiguration of US military presence abroad, is the most important question."

**27 December 2004** Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says Russia and China will hold the first-ever joint exercises on Chinese territory in the second half of 2005. He also says that there will be joint exercises of the CSTO in Tajikistan in April 2005. Russia-NATO exercises, and traditional naval exercises with France, involving nuclear forces, are also scheduled for 2005. He says that Russia might have joint exercises with Germany in 2005, and that "Russia will continue joint actions in the Mediterranean Sea together with the United States, some NATO member countries and states unaffiliated to the alliance".

**28 December 2004** The CSTO Secretary-General Nikolay Bordyuzha says in order to effectively counter terrorist and extremist organizations, a unified legislative base is needed within the framework of the CSTO. He says the CSTO is setting up an intergovernmental commission for military-economic cooperation for the purpose of cooperation between the states' defence industries. Bordyuzha says that the CSTO intends to cooperate with NATO in security issues of the Central Asian region. He says the CSTO has sent NATO a proposal inviting the Alliance to participate in the international antiterrorist operation Kanal-2005.

**28 December 2004** An MFA spokesman says OSCE observers drew insufficiently objective conclusions about the elections in Ukraine.

Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says he does not believe Viktor Yushchenko's victory in the Ukrainian presidential election will be reflected in Russian-Ukrainian defence and security relations.

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**28 December 2004** Deputy foreign minister Aleksandr Alexeyev is interviewed in *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*. He discusses Russo-Chinese relations.

**29 December 2004** LUKoil and Russian Railways sign an agreement on transporting oil to China. According to the agreement, LUKoil will deliver 3m tonnes of oil to China in 2005. Oil deliveries to China in 2005 will amount to 10m tonnes, of which 3m tonnes will be delivered by LUKoil, 4m by Rosneft and 3m tonnes by Yukos. Fadeyev says by the year 2007 Russia will increase the supply of oil to the People's Republic of China to 15m tonnes.

**29 December 2004** The head of the Central Electoral Commission, Aleksandr Veshnyakov, says despite major irregularities in the latest voting in Ukraine, the results of the elections are going to be recognized by Russia. "In my view, it is a very strange situation that a shortage of ballot papers was registered at a significant number of polling stations - for some reason, this was mainly in eastern and southern regions of Ukraine. These were the biggest shortcomings. But I would not conclude that these shortcomings, along with others, make it categorically impossible to establish the results of the elections. I, at least, have no grounds for speaking in such unequivocal terms today. So I think in the next few days we shall learn, first, the decision of the Ukrainian Electoral Commission, which is to compile and announce the official results, and, second, if there is an application to the courts, the decision of the Ukrainian court as to the extent to which these irregularities, along with others perhaps, could have affected the results. I have a feeling that these elections will in the end be recognized."

**29 December 2004** The MFA on its website outlines MFA activities for 2005: "They will, as before, be focused on ensuring reliable security of the country and providing the most favourable external conditions for its economic and social development."

### **Celebration of WW2 victory, settlement of conflicts in post-Soviet areas to top Russia's foreign policy priorities in 2005**

One of the major international events of the year will be the 60th anniversary celebrations of the victory over fascism in Moscow with participation of the world's top leaders. The United Nations and the OSCE have adopted decisions to celebrate this event.

Our chief priority remains the development of relations with the CIS nations. As the chairman of the CIS in 2005, Russia will actively promote the work on improving mechanisms for the commonwealth and other integration structures (the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Single Economic Space, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the Eurasian Economic Community, the Central Asian Cooperation). We will make a constructive contribution to the settlement of conflicts in the post-Soviet space within the framework of existing international formats.

### **Russia ready for closer ties with the USA**

Russia is ready to build on its partner relations with the United States, primarily in the struggle against terrorism. In the European sector, our chief objective will be the completion of the joint work with the European

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Union on the roadmaps for the Four Common Spaces: economic space; space for freedom, security and justice; space for cooperation on external security; and space for research, education and culture.

As part of its multivector foreign policy, Russia will be building up cooperation with China, India, and the states forming the integration associations of the Asia-Pacific Region (APEC, ASEAN, and others). The first Russia-ASEAN Summit will be held in 2005. Its focus will be on the use of the new possibilities for the building up of economic cooperation with the countries of the AP region, Latin America and Africa.

Carrying on its policy of strengthening the UN, Russia will take an active part in collective efforts to reform the Organization with due regard to the recommendations of the Panel of Wise Men and Women. The ultimate goal is to help shape a more secure and stable system of international relations which would best meet the interests of Russia's equal participation in world politics and economics and the tasks of collectively tackling international problems.

**30 December 2004** The Emergencies Ministry begins delivering humanitarian supplies to Sri Lanka, following the tsunami disaster.

**30 December 2004** The government approves a ruling stipulating the construction of an oil pipeline to Nakhodka. The pipeline is expected to have an annual throughput capacity of 80m tonnes. The pipeline is to connect the town of Tayshet in Eastern Siberia with the town of Skovorodino on the Chinese border in the Russian Far East and from there continue to Nakhodka.

**30 December 2004** Gazprom and Beltranshaz have signed a contract for gas delivery and transit in 2005. Gazprom will supply 19.1bn cubic metres of gas to Belarus at a price of 46.68 dollars per thousand cu.m.

**30 December 2004** Fedor Lukyanov, editor-in-chief of *Rossiya v Globalnoy Politike* gives a detailed preview of Russian foreign policy in 2005 published on Gazeta.ru web site.

**30 December 2004** The Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Aleksiy II says the West has a policy of double standards over Kosovo. He accuses Albanian extremists of destroying Serb Orthodox churches and monasteries, with the international peacekeeping forces doing nothing to prevent this. He says the policy of double standards was also seen in the fact that "almost all Serbian people did not participate in the recent elections in Kosovo", but Western states deemed them legally valid.

**31 December 2004** MFA spokesman Aleksandr Yakovenko says:

Events of the past few days have once again clearly shown the need to step up international cooperation in preventing natural disasters and

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accidents, to create efficient multilateral mechanisms for eliminating their consequences. Russia has more than once - both at the state level and at the Emergencies Ministry level - proposed initiatives for establishing and improving cooperation in this area. We are ready to continue closely coordinating these efforts with the UN and - within G8 - with the EU and NATO, as well as our partners in Asia and CIS countries in order to - in the near future - create safeguard mechanisms that would make it possible to minimize the consequences of natural disasters and quickly and efficiently help all those affected by them.

**31 December 2004** The OSCE completes its mission on the Russo-Georgian border.

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