

Russian Domestic Policy: A Chronology

January – March 2006

2 January 2006 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov is interviewed on *Russia TV* on the Black Sea Fleet and state of the armed forces. He discusses army housing, draft deferments, the state defence order.

5 January 2006 A three day anti-terrorist operation ends in Dagestan.

5 January 2006 Strategic Missile Troops (SMT) commander Col-Gen Nikolay Solovtsov say the SMT will perform eight to ten combat-training and test missile launches in 2006.

6 January 2006 Vladimir Putin visits Yakutia. He says:

The development of Yakutia's oil and gas industry could provide a fulcrum of growth for the whole eastern Siberian region. Not only can it safely meet Yakutia's internal needs, but it can also bring about energy supplies to the markets of the Far Eastern Federal District and further on to the markets of our partners in the Asia Pacific region. The Asia Pacific region's energy needs are growing faster than those of any other world region.

Putin says that the work to implement the Eastern Siberia - Pacific Ocean (ESPO) oil pipeline project is to begin in the summer of 2006.

10 January 2006 Vladimir Putin sends a message to Moslems celebrating Id al-Adha.

10 January 2006 Rebel leader in Kabarda-Balkaria, Amir Seyfullah, says that the jihad or holy war against Russia will strengthen and expand.

10 January 2006 Official spokesperson for the Prosecutor-General's Office Natalya Vishnyakova says that former Yukos head Mikhail Khodorkovskiy may face new charges.

11 January 2006 The criminal who attacked a synagogue in central Moscow is identified as 21-year-old Aleksandr Koptsev, who lives in Moscow.

12 January 2006 Col-Gen Nikolay Rogozhkin, commander-in-chief of the Internal Troops, says that the Internal Troops of the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs are to be cut by 80,000 people by 2016. They currently stand at 200,000. He says that the Internal Troops in Chechnya will have two specialized motorized battalions, designated North and South, which will be manned with Chechen nationals.

12 January 2006 Sergey Ivanov, deputy prime minister and defence minister, outlines his vision for Russia's modernized 21st century armed forces in an article for *Vedomosti* newspaper. Ivanov listed possible threats to Russia's national security, focusing particularly on the possibility of political instability in CIS countries, and argued that the army must be modernized and become more mobile

and adaptable in order to counter these. He outlined three priority areas: the development of strategic deterrent forces, the creation of rapid reaction units and improving combat training.

12 January 2006 Rosatom chief Sergey Kiriyyenko says there is a need to restore a unified Ministry of Medium-Scale Machine Building complex. He says Russia intends to restore the atomic industry complex that existed in the USSR and is undertaking a dialogue with Ukraine and Kazakhstan for this purpose.

13 January 2006 Interior Minister Rashid Nurgaliyev meets Russia's chief rabbi, Berl Lazar, to exchange information and respond promptly to the dissemination of information that incites ethnic or religious strife.

Aleksandr Koptsev, who attacked synagogue worshippers in Moscow on 11 January, is formally charged on three counts defined by the Criminal Code. He admits to being anti-semitic.

15 January 2006 Gazprom head Aleksey Miller is interviewed on *Vesti Nedeli*.

17 January 2006 Vladimir Putin signs the federal law "On the special economic zone in Kaliningrad Region and on amendments to certain legislative acts of the Russian Federation".

17 January 2006 Chechen President Alu Alkhanov says the leadership of the Chechen Republic is seriously concerned about the presence of a large numbers of foreign mercenaries in the region.

Khayrudi Visingeriyev is appointed secretary of the Security Council of the Chechen Republic.

17 January 2006 Nikolay Bordyuzha, secretary-general of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), has spoken in favour of cooperation between the CSTO and NATO. He expresses concern over Ukraine's plans to join NATO.

17 January 2006 Over 50 senior officers from the Strategic Missile Troops staff, as well as heads of divisional operational sections, participate in a two-day exercise.

17 January 2006: Lt-Gen Arkadiy Bakhin is appointed deputy commander of the Siberian Military District.

17 January 2006 *Versiya* newspaper reports that the government is tightening rules for the issue of visas to foreigners. A new version of corresponding laws will likely be adopted during the ongoing spring session of the State Duma. If the amendments to laws "On the procedure for departure from and entry into the Russian Federation" and "On the legal status of foreign nationals in the Russian Federation" are adopted, unfriendly actions damaging Russia's international prestige will become a valid ground for denial of entry visas. Another reason might be if a foreign national has ever made disparaging remarks about Russia's state symbols, its authorities or about cultural, spiritual or social values that have historically emerged in Russia.

18 January 2006 Vladimir Putin meets deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov. They discuss the state of Russian military industry and arms exports. Arms exports totalled \$6 billion in 2005. They also discuss the Glonass satellite navigation system and housing for servicemen.

18 January 2006 Severe cold in Moscow affects the power supply. Gas supplies to Europe are cut because of severe freezing temperatures in Russia.

18 January 2006 Head of Rosenergo Sergey Oganesyanyan says Russia has sufficient oil reserves for an average of 15 years. He says that Russia has a large amount of crude oil, enough to allow the extraction of 550m tonnes a year in the near future. In 2005 known reserves increased by only 230m tonnes, while more than 470m tonnes of oil were extracted.

18 January 2006 The acting head of the Chechen government, Ramzan Kadyrov, says that no more than 250 rebel fighters are operating in Chechnya.

18 January 2006 Biometric passports are introduced in Kaliningrad.

18 January 2006 It is stated that the first parliament in the new Kamchatka Territory, merging Kamchatka Region and the Koryak Autonomous Area (KAA) will come into effect on 1 July 2007.

19 January 2006 Viktor Khristenko the Industry and Energy Minister says that:

In the last three days the energy consumption - in the country as a whole and in individual areas - has beaten all the existing records. The Moscow area has never in history seen loads this high and in Russia energy consumption is higher than ever in the last 15 years. For a situation of this kind there are set procedures in place, which envisage the introduction of the so-called Schedule No 1, which ensures the reduction of risks for the functioning of the system as a whole and restrictions on consumption for certain groups of consumers.

Rosenergoatom says that restrictions on the output of electricity have been lifted at the majority of Russian nuclear power stations because of increased energy consumption caused by the cold weather.

19 January 2006 Central Bank of Russia head Sergey Ignat'yev briefs Vladimir Putin on inflation and the currency.

19 January 2006 First Deputy Prime Minister Dmitriy Medvedev meets senior Yedinaya Rossia party members and government ministers to discuss the implementation of the national priority projects. He says Yedinaya Rossiya could help monitor the implementation of the projects.

20 January 2006 Rosatom chief Sergey Kiriyyenko says that Russia plans to increase the share of nuclear in power generation from its current 16 per cent to 25 by 2030 and build at least 40 new reactors by the same time.

20 January 2006 The Federal Security Service (FSB) says that Russia's power structures have stepped up security measures in the North Caucasus after receiving information that international terrorists in (Georgia's) Pankisi Gorge are planning to carry out acts of terrorism in a number of regions in the south of Russia.

22 January 2006 *Russia TV* reports that at the end of 2005 the FSB stopped an operation by British intelligence services in Moscow.

20 January 2006 Chechen rebel leader Abdul-Khalim Sadulayev issues several decrees creating a public consultative body of the Caucasus peoples, including the chairman of the rebel parliament and senior commanders on the defence committee, and appointing rebel commanders in towns and villages as administration heads.

23 January 2006 Vladimir Putin calls for tightening up of security at energy facilities in the Caucasus. The measure is linked with the 22 January bombing of power line pylons in Karachay-Cherkessia and the blowing up of the Mozdok-Tbilisi gas pipeline.

24 January 2006 The head of the Russian Statistics Agency, Vladimir Sokolin, says that Russia's "population is continuing to diminish". On 1 December 2005, the country's population was 142.8m million. Sokolin says that in 2005 the decrease of the population is expected to be the same as in 2004. The population of Russia will go down by 680,000.

24 January 2006 The People's Assembly of the Chechen parliament creates a commission that will be in charge of the search for abducted and missing people, says speaker Dukvakha Abdurakhmanov, who will chair the commission.

24 January 2006 Chechen Prosecutor Valeriy Kuznetsov says 70 gangs numbering a total of 700 people are currently operating on Chechen territory. He says around 100 are mercenaries from foreign states.

24 January 2006 Duma Defence Committee Chairman Viktor Zavarzin says Russia's defence spending will amount to about R800bn in 2006. Of this, R666bn will be spent as part of the "National Defence" programme, while another R132bn is envisaged in five other sections of the Defence Ministry's budget.

24 January 2006 Former Yukos head Mikhail Khodorkovskiy's lawyers say they intend to appeal against the actions by the management of the prison in which he is held at all judicial levels, including the European Court of Human Right.

25 January 2006 Federal Space Agency (Roskosmos) head Anatoliy Perminov says that the role of military space assets in maintaining national security will grow. "The contribution of space communication, intelligence and map-making assets to raise the efficiency of the armed forces activity is growing. All this has naturally led to elaboration of the programme of Russian military space potential development and bringing it to the level that guarantees our nation's reliable defence."

25 January 2006 Lyubov Kudelina, the head of the MOD's economic and financial department, says national defence accounts for 80 per cent of the total MOD budget.

26 January 2006 Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says that all culprits will be punished for the bullying incident in the Chelyabinsk tank academy. Ella Pamfilova, head of the Russian presidential council on assistance in the construction of institutions of civil society and human rights, calls for resignations of all Defence Ministry officials who failed to intervene in a brutal bullying incident in the Chelyabinsk tank forces' military college that left one victim, Pte Andrey Sychev, crippled for life.

26 January 2006 Gazeta.ru reports that Russian human rights campaigners intend to sue the Russia Television channel, which accused them of links with the British spies exposed by the FSB.

26 January 2006 Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says he is not seeking promotion to any higher post.

26 January 2006 Yedinaya Rossiya puts forward an initiative for the country's political parties and civil movements to sign up to an antifascism pact, the Agreement on Opposing Nationalism, Xenophobia and Religious Hatred.

26 January 2006 Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov criticises regions for failing to implement federal projects efficiently.

26 January 2006 Vyacheslav Postavnin, deputy director of the Federal Migration Service, says that there are currently between 5m and 14m illegal migrants in Russia.

26 January 2006 Deputy Prime Minister Aleksandr Zhukov proposes to make Russian regions subject to natural selection according to the principle: the worse the situation in a region is, the less the federal subvention is. More effective regions should receive more aid.

26 January 2006 Lyubov Kudelina, head of the MOD economic and financial department, says Russia will spend R666bn (23.83bn dollars) on defence in 2006, which is 15.1 per cent more than in 2005. The defence budget amounts to 15.6 per cent of total spending or about 2.73 per cent of 2006 GDP, compared with 2.75 per cent in 2005 and 2.65 per cent in 2004. The general structure of the expenditure of the Ministry of Defence for 2006 is as follows: upkeep of personnel - 28 per cent; development, purchasing and repairs of weapons, military hardware and special equipment - 33 per cent; combat training and logistical support - 14 per cent; payment of military pensions - 11 per cent; investment in fixed assets - over 6 per cent; and other expenses - just over 7 per cent.

The MOD will take part in 14 federal programmes in 2006. Some of the key programmes are: the programme on shifting to volunteer manning of some units and detachments during the period from 2004 to 2007; and programme of developing coastal infrastructure for the Black Sea Fleet on Russian territory; the programme of Russian Federation state border development in 2003-2010; the programme of Russian spaceport development in 2006-2015; the programme of weapons scrapping in 2005-2010; and the programme of social support to handicapped servicemen in 2006-2010.

27 January 2006 The Justice Ministry orders the closing down of the NGO Research Centre for Human Rights.

27 January 2006 *Vedomosti* claims that Gazprom intends to enter the nuclear industry.

27 January 2006 Finance Minister Aleksey Kudrin says the government is to adopt its first three-year financial plan in February.

27 January 2006 Deputy Russian Health and Social Development Minister Vladimir Starodubov says that over the last decade Russia's infant mortality rate

has halved. In 2005 the infant mortality rate was 11 deaths per every 1,000 live births. This figure was 11.6 in 2004, 12.4 in 2003 and 13.3 in 2002. The level of maternal and infant mortality in Russia still remains higher than the European average.

28 January 2006 Chechen separatist foreign minister Usman Ferzauli says the separatist leadership is ready for talks with the Kremlin.

29 January 2006 Chechnya's military commandant, Grigoriy Fomenko, says that rebel military activity in Chechnya is declining.

30 January 2006 The FSB says it is instituting criminal proceedings in the case of an electronic device for short-range spying found in Moscow.

30 January 2006 Chelyabinsk Region governor Petr Sumin allocates R500,000 for the treatment and rehabilitation of Pte Andrey Sychev, who was maimed as a result of bullying.

30 January 2006 Economic Development and Trade Minister German Gref presents economic figures for 2005. He says that growth in GDP was expected to be 6.4 per cent. He also says Russia's gold and currency reserve increased in 2005 by 57.7bn dollars to 182.2bn dollars. Real wages increased by 0.7 per cent and real incomes by 8.8 per cent. Investments in the Russian economy increased by 10.5 per cent, which is 1 per cent less than 2005.

30 January 2006 The Federal Registration Service states that the National Bolshevik Party has been denied registration.

31 January 2006 The FSB says its investigation into British intelligence activities is not targeting NGOs.

31 January 2006 Acting Chechen Prime Minister Ramzan Kadyrov says that prime minister Sergey Abramov will resume his direct duties after completing a course of treatment and rehabilitation. Abramov was involved in a traffic accident in Moscow Region at the end of December.

31 January 2006 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov visits the construction site of a new missile warning radar in Lekhtusi near Leningrad. The site will be commissioned in 2007. Ivanov says another missile warning station will be built in southern Russia.

31 January 2006 The Committee of Soldiers' Mothers of Russia says that Sergey Ivanov should go as defence minister following the Chelyabinsk bullying incident.

31 January 2006 Dmitriy Rogozin, leader of Rodina, is interviewed in *Argumenty i Fakty*.

An article in *Argumenty i Fakty* discusses regional separatism.

31 January 2006 Vladimir Putin makes the following comment about NGOs: "These organizations should be independent and should not be controlled by foreign puppeteers. This is because when we come up against instances of this kind we are merely compromising the work of NGOs."

February

1 February 2006 Human rights activists protests outside FSB HQ in Moscow. About 20 participants are detained. They are protesting about FSB moves against human rights NGOs.

2 February 2006 The Moscow arbitration court declares the auction of the Sosnovka-1 plot of land, used for a holiday home which currently belongs to former Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov, to be illegal. At the same time the court rejects the claim of Rosimushchestvo (Federal Agency for Management of Federal Property) for the return of Sosnovka-1 to federal ownership.

2 February 2006 TV reports that Russian citizens will start getting new foreign travel passports in 2007. The new document will have a microchip.

2 February 2006 Deputy head of Rosatom Sergey Antipov says an international centre for work with uranium and fissionable materials could be set up in Siberia.

2 February 2006 The former prime minister, Mikhail Kasyanov, says the Moscow arbitration court's decision to declare the auction of real estate at Sosnovka-1, a former state residence to the northwest of Moscow, invalid, is "political rather than legal".

3 February 2006 Alrosa's supervisory board approves a plan to raise the Russian state's stake in the company to 50 per cent plus one share.

2 February 2006 Strategic Rocket Troops commanding officer Col-Gen Nikolay Solovtsov says a new computerized command system is being introduced.

3 February 2006 The chief of the Main Staff of the MVD, Lt-Gen Sergey Bunin, says that starting in 2007, there will be no conscript soldiers in the units of the MVD Internal Troops located in conflict zones.

5 February 2006 The Union of Soldiers' Mothers' Committees, the Coalition of Organizations for Democratic Alternative Civilian Service and the Committee for Civil Rights presents a petition calling for the dismissal of Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov following the Andrey Sychev bullying scandal.

Sergey Ivanov says that those charged with bullying in the armed forces will face trial.

6 February 2006 Anatoliy Safonov, the Russian president's special representative for international cooperation in the fight against terrorist and transnational organized crime, says that Russia deems 15 organizations to be terrorist. The Russian list includes the Taleban movement, al-Qa'idah, the Congress of Peoples of Ichkeria and Dagestan, the Muslim Brotherhood and the Islamic Freedom Party.

6 February 2006 The deputy head of the Federal Industry Agency (Rosprom), Stanislav Puginskiy, says that prime minister Mikhail Fradkov has signed documents setting up a single aircraft construction company.

6 February 2006 Russia's Council of Muftis condemns the actions of militant Islamists in organizing mass disturbances and setting fire to European diplomatic missions in several Arab countries to demonstrate against the publication of cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad.

7 February 2006 Presidential aide and deputy head of the Kremlin administration Vladislav Surkov gives a major speech on Russian sovereignty. See <http://www.edinros.ru/news.html?id=111148>

7 February 2006 Vladimir Putin meets the FSB collegium.

7 February 2006 Aleksandr Yelin, deputy chief of the Interior Ministry department for fighting organized crime and terrorism, says the number of terrorist acts in Russia decreased by almost 40 per cent in 2005. A total of 162 such acts were registered.

8 February 2006 Head of Rosatom Sergey Kiriyenko says that Russia has come to a stage beyond which the country may start facing an energy supply crisis. "The possibility of a crisis is real if Rosatom fails to meet the objective set by the president that by the year 2030 nuclear power stations should account for 25 per cent of the country's electricity output...Ten nuclear power stations in the country currently produce only 16 per cent of energy consumed by industry and the population...Russia's nuclear energy agency and Kurchatov institute specialists must urgently use all existing potential to successfully resolve the task set by the president and build 40 new nuclear energy units in Russia by 2030."

Kiriyenko says the revival of nuclear power engineering which is currently taking place in the world requires the shaping of a new system of guarantees for nonproliferation of nuclear weapons.

9 February 2006 Deputy Prosecutor-General Nikolay Shepel asks for the death penalty for Beslan hostage taker Nurpashi Kulayev. Duma Deputy Speaker Vladimir Pekhtin says the Duma will not repeal the moratorium on the death penalty.

9 February 2006 The head of Gazprom Aleksey Miller is elected chairman of the board of directors of the Sibneft oil company. At the end of 2005 Gazprom bought over 72 per cent in Sibneft for 13.1bn dollars. Taking into account the 3 per cent of Sibneft shares that Gazprom had earlier bought from Gazprombank, Gazprom acquired control of over 75 per cent of the shares in Sibneft.

10 February 2006 The Ministry of Economic Development forecasts a doubling of direct foreign investments in Russia in 2008. According to the Central Bank, in 2005 direct foreign investments in Russia amounted to 16.7bn dollars. In 2008 they are expected to reach 34bn dollars.

10 February 2006 Stavropol Territory's Main Internal Affairs Directorate states that 11 rebels have been killed in the Stavropol Territory village of Tukuy-Mekteb as a result of a special operation.

10 February 2006 Sakhalin Region governor Ivan Malakhov says there is a need for a law on a special economic zone on the Kuril Islands.

11 February 2006 Finance Minister Aleksey Kudrin says Russia could lift all restrictions on exporting capital by 1 January 2007.

13 February 2006 Chairman of the Federation Council Sergey Mironov says that the Council has started keeping a dossier on the law on the activities of NGOs in Russia.

Mironov says he favours universal conscription.

13 February 2006 The first deputy head of the department for relations with bodies ensuring Moscow government security, Vasiliy Oleynik, says over two million illegal migrants from other countries and people without nationality permanently reside in Moscow. The number of illegal labour migrants alone stands at about one million.

14 February 2006 Maj-Gen Vladimir Vasilenko, head of the 4th Central Research and Development Institute of the MOD, says Russia could employ medium-range missiles to counter security threats resulting from nuclear proliferation.

15 February 2006 Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Sergey Ivanov addresses the Duma on bullying in the armed forces.

16 February 2006 Vladimir Putin says that: “The most fundamental task is the diversification of our economy, the transition to completely new hi-tech methods for its development and the gradual departure from excessive dependence on raw materials, on natural resources, on oil and gas. And I have come with my colleagues to Nizhniy Novgorod today to discuss these very problems, connected above all with information technology, because it is one of the main fields within the context of the task being addressed.”

Putin signs a decree on anti-terrorist measures which envisages setting up a national anti-terrorist committee. FSB Director Nikolay Patrushev will head the committee.

Duma security committee first deputy chairman Mikhail Grishankov is interviewed on TV on the formation of the new National Antiterrorist Committee and new counterterrorism law.

16 February 2006 The 75-year-old chairman of the State Council of Dagestan, Magomedali Magomedovich Magomedov, says he will step down soon. Three people will be nominated for the post of Dagestan president. They are Chairman of the People's Assembly of Dagestan Mukhu Aliyev, Makhachkala mayor Said Amirov and head of the republic's federal treasury directorate Saygidguseyn Magomedov.

17 February 2006 Minister for Trade and Economic Development German Gref says that 2005 economic figures show a trend towards deceleration in Russian industrial growth. In 2004 growth was over 8 per cent, in 2005 it was 4 per cent.

18 February 2006 The 58th Army holds an exercise in North Ossetia.

20 February 2006 Col-Gen Yuriy Solovyev, head of the Air Force Special Command, says that aircraft seized by extremists to commit terrorist attacks in Moscow and the surrounding region will be shot down.

20 February 2006 Vladimir Putin signs the decree "On approving members of the commission for military-technical cooperation of the Russian Federation with foreign states".

20 February 2006 The president of Kabarda-Balkaria, Arsen Kanokov, says he thinks that the Islamic threat has been blown out of proportion and the problem is not about religious extremism, but religious illiteracy.

21 February 2006 The director of the FSB, Nikolay Patrushev, says he regards Russian NGOs as an important instrument of civil society and has given an assurance that the FSB has not planned and is not planning any special operations against them.

21 February 2006 Rosatom head Sergey Kiriyyenko says that the state plans to regain control of Atomstroyeksport, which builds nuclear power stations abroad. A deal will be signed in a week's time in which Gazprombank will buy 4 per cent of the company that builds nuclear power stations abroad. The value of the deal has not yet been made public, but after it is completed the state's stake in the company will be 50.2 per cent. Every year up to 2030 Russia plans to build two nuclear reactors. The nuclear sector is implementing the task set by the Russian president to increase nuclear energy's share of total electricity production to 25 per cent in the next 25 years.

21 February 2006 The Federal Statistics Service states that Russia's permanent population (taking into account migration processes) decreased by 735,500 people in 2005 to total 142,700,000 on 1 January 2006. A total of 1,460,100 were born in Russia in 2005, and 2,303,100 died. Respectively, this is 42,400 fewer and 7,700 more as compared with 2004 figures. Natural wastage (the difference in the number of deaths and births) therefore amounted to 843,000. In 2004, the figure was 792,900. In 2005, the number of births decreased in 78 of the Russian Federation, whereas the number of deaths increased in 47. The number of deaths in Russia as a whole was 60 per cent higher than the number of births. The figure reached 100-180 per cent in 23 constituent parts of the federation. Natural growth of the population was only registered in 16 constituent parts.

21 February 2006 Commander of the troops in the North Caucasus Military District Army Gen Aleksandr Baranov says that over 11,000 posts in the units of the North Caucasus Military District are expected to be manned by contract servicemen by the end of 2006.

21 February 2006 *Gazeta* reports that Ministry of Civil Defence, Emergencies, and Natural Disasters will undergo a major reform and be demilitarised.

21 February 2006 Defence minister Sergey Ivanov is interviewed in *Izvestiya*.

FSB Director Nikolay Patrushev is interviewed in *Argumenty i Fakty* on military counter-intelligence.

21 February 2006 The newly-elected president of Dagestan, Mukhu Aliyev, takes up office.

21 February 2006 Vladimir Putin signs a decree on setting up a united aircraft building corporation which will include all Russian aviation factories and design bureaux. The controlling stake in the company, about 60 per cent of shares, will be state-owned. It is planned to increase aircraft production almost three-fold over 10 years.

22 February 2006 The Duma passes in its second reading a law on countering terrorism.

22 February 2006 Health and Social Development Minister Mikhail Zurabov states that the death rate in Russia is far greater than in Europe and the USA. The Russian Federation's death rate is 16 per 1,000 people per year. Between 1993 and 2005, Russia's population shrank by 4 per cent, or 5.8 million. The number of newly-born infants in 2004-2005 exceeded the 1990s levels. The number of infants born in 2005 was 210,000 more than in 1999.

22 February 2006 Presidential representative to the Southern Federal District Dmitry Kozak says he has instructed the prosecutor-general's office to look into an apparent move by the Chechen leadership to introduce compulsory teaching of the Koran and of Shari'ah law in Chechen schools. Kozak has also expressed concern over acting Chechen prime minister Ramzan Kadyrov's recent promise to throw Danish humanitarian organizations out of Chechnya.

22 February 2006 A article on bashnews.ru lists possible successors to president Murtaza Rakhimov in Bashkortostan.

23 February 2006 Vladimir Putin says that the armed forces will continue to increase the number of servicemen on contract service while reducing the period of service for conscripts.

Putin meets the UN's high commissioner for human rights, Louise Arbour, in Moscow. Putin acknowledges problems with human rights in Russia, especially in the North Caucasus.

24 February 2006 Chief of the General Staff Army Gen Yuriy Baluyevskiy is interviewed on RNTV on the state of the armed forces.

24 February 2006 The UN human rights commissioner, Louise Arbour, says that Chechnya is still ruled by force rather than by law.

25 February 2006 United Civic Front chairman Garri Kasparov says that the opposition should nominate a single candidate for Russian president in 2008.

26 February 2006 Sergey Lavrov meets Russian Muslim leaders.

26 February 2006 The Duma passes the counterterrorism law in its third and final reading.

26 February 2006 Rosselkhoznadzor says bird flu has been confirmed in six regions of Russia.

26 February 2006 The MOD says that a total of 3,501 servicemen have died and another 32 went missing in Chechnya between 1999 and January 2006. According to the official statistics 547 servicemen died and 12 went missing in 1999. For 2000 the figures were 1,397 and 13; for 2001 502 and two; for 2002 they were 485 and no-one missing; for 2003 299 and one missing; for 2004 162 and no-one missing; and for 2005 they were 103 dead and four missing. In January 2006 six servicemen died and no-one went missing in Chechnya.

26 February 2006 Varfolomey Korobushin, first vice-president of the Academy of Military Sciences, says "I think the creation of a single strategic nuclear forces command is inexpedient when there is no single combat control system." He says

the US NMD system could lead to a new nuclear arms race. "The striving of some Eastern European leaders to room elements of US national missile defence on their sovereign territories will denunciate all agreements that were aimed at making the positions of Russia and NATO closer. If Americans insist on deploying their NMD elements in Eastern Europe and space, the balance of power in the nuclear missile domain will be shattered."

27 February 2006 Former prime minister Mikhail Kasyanov says he plans to set up a new public movement in Russia. Kasyanov names Irina Khakamada, Nikolay Travkin, Ivan Starikov and Konstantin Merzlikin among his closest associates.

27 February 2006 The deputy head of the Federal Agency for the Use of Mineral Resources, Vladimir Bavlov, says that given the current level of use, Russia's in-storage stocks of uranium may be depleted as early as 2015. Currently about 15,000 tonnes of uranium are being used annually, including for defence purposes, whereas the annual production of uranium in Russia stands at about 3,300 tonnes.

27 February 2006 Maj-Gen Vladimir Vasilenko, head of the MOD's 4th central research and development institute, says that the Russian Strategic Missile Troops should give priority to mobile ground and naval systems in its force development plans.

28 February 2006 First Deputy Prime Minister Dmitriy Medvedev says the department of priority national projects has been set up in the office of the Russian government. The main aim of the new structure will be to coordinate the work of the ministries and departments with regard to implementing priority national projects as well as to control how deadlines are met, to prepare the required legal basis and legal norms and documents.

28 February 2006 Chechen President Alu Alkhanov says the Combined Federal Force in Chechnya is about 36,000-38,000.

28 February 2006 Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov makes the following statement about the new movement he seeks to set up:

The aim of the movement that we are creating is to unite more than one party, or more people, not only supporters of just one party. This is because at the current stage there is no need for inter-party discussions on designing or perfecting one or another programme for socio-economic development, but there is an aim to preserve the general principles spelt out in the constitution, the spirit of the constitution, that is the principles of a democratic establishment, of a social state, which are being eroded today. This is why an inter-party discussion is less timely than making a leap to preserve these principles.

March

1 March 2006 The Federation Council approves the law on fighting terror recently passed by the Duma.

2 March 2006 Sergey Abramov resigns as Chechen prime minister. President Alu Alkhanov asks the People's Assembly to approve Ramzan Kadyrov as prime minister of the republic.

2 March 2006 The Prosecutor-General's Office opens a criminal case against Boris Berezovskiy who stands charged with carrying out actions aimed at the seizure of power by force in violation of the constitution. Documents for the extradition of Boris Berezovskiy were sent on 1 March to the Home Office in Great Britain.

2 March 2006 Air Force C-in-C Army Gen Vladimir Mikhaylov briefs foreign defence attaches on the aircraft currently in use in his command.

4 March 2006 The People's Assembly of the Chechen republic approves the appointment of Ramzan Kadyrov to the post of chairman of the Chechen government. He will remain in charge of the security apparatus.

6 March 2006 Vladimir Putin signs the federal law "On countering terrorism". The law, the blueprint of which was developed after a series of terrorist acts in Russia in 2004, will replace the federal law "On combating terrorism", which has been in force since 1998.

6 March 2006 Yedinaya Rossiya leader Boris Gryzlov says that the party now has one million members.

6 March 2006 Deputy Chief Prosecutor Nikolay Shepel says the criminal investigation of the terrorist act in Beslan is extended until 1 July.

6 March 2006 Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says that 70 per cent of the armed forces personnel will be contract servicemen by the end of 2007. 57 per cent of soldiers and sergeants have already been transferred to contract service, which is 60,623 men.

Maj-Gen Nikolay Bezborodov, a member of the Duma defence committee, says the armed forces have been underfunded by over 30 per cent in the past five years. He noted that the annual federal budget spending within the framework of the national defence section remained at 2.7-2.8 per cent of GDP in 2001-2005. At the same time, the presidential decree titled "Basics (Concept) of Russian state policy on armed forces development until 2005" envisaged a rise in defence spending to 3.5 per cent.

7 March 2006 The first meeting of the National Antiterrorist Committee takes place in Moscow.

9 March 2006 The Civil G8-2006 forum opens in Moscow.

9 March 2006 Maj-Gen Nikolay Bezborodov says the Russian armed forces will have been armed with contemporary weapon systems only by 2030 even if materiel is procured at due rates.

The rate of annual arms and materiel deliveries should be increased to 5 per cent of the current amount in service with the Russian armed forces. It means about 140-150 aircraft, 40-60 helicopters, 200 tanks, and 250 artillery pieces a year...Even such a drastic increase in arms and materiel procurements will allow the armed forces to be re-armed with contemporary arms in 20-25 years, i.e. not earlier than 2030...If arms procurements are not stepped up drastically, combat capabilities of the armed forces are expected to plunge ten-fold by 2011.

10 March 2006 Chairman of the Chechen government Ramzan Kadyrov says that rebel units in Chechnya have been routed once and for all. He says more than 3,000 Chechen Interior Ministry operatives are engaged in a constant search for Shamil Basayev and Doku Umarov in the mountainous area of the republic. He says (11 March) over 7,000 rebels have laid down their arms and returned to peaceful life in the last few years.

11 March 2006 The Council of Russia's Muftis says it is opposed to "Fundamentals of Orthodox culture" being taught in state and municipal schools.

12 March 2006 Deputy Prime Minister Aleksandr Zhukov has forecast that the Russian economy will grow at 6 per cent a year for the next three years. Zhukov says that from the Stabilisation Fund should increase from its present R1,500bn to over R2,000bn by 2007 and by another R1,000bn, to R3,000bn, by 2008.

13 March 2006 Sergey Kiriyyenko, head of the Federal Atomic Energy Agency, says that Russia needs to build at least 40 gigawatts of nuclear power generating capacity by 2030.

14 March 2006 Vladimir Putin says he is concerned about the state of affairs in Russia's nuclear industry and has warned that its share in the energy balance could fall. Putin says the share of nuclear energy in the country's electricity output should grow to at least 20 per cent. Nuclear power is likely to account for 16 per cent of electricity production in 2006. He warns that unless new power stations are built, the share could fall to 13 per cent.

14 March 2006 The deputy chairman of the Duma's health committee, Nikolay Gerasimenko, says the decline in Russia's population is accompanied by a decline in its health. The population of Russia shrank by 5.8m people, or 4 per cent, between 1993 and 2005. Two hundred and sixty people are born every minute in the world and 107 die, with the birth rate exceeding the mortality rate by 2.6 times. In Russia the trend is the opposite. Three people are born every minute, while five die.

The committee's chairman, Tatyana Yakovleva, says Russia's population could drop to 120m by 2030. "This is one of our challenges in the 21st century, the grave demographic crisis afflicting Russia. If the situation doesn't change, the population could drop to 120m as early as 2030 and to 80m by about 2075." Russia had a population of 142.7m on 1 January 2006 according to preliminary figures from the Federal State Statistics Service, she added. Another prediction was 138m people by 2012. The mortality rate is 16.1 per 1,000 head of population.

14 March 2006 MOD sources states that it is planned to conscript 124,500 during the spring call-up (during the period from 1 April to 30 June) to serve in the armed forces and other forces. That is more than 30,000 fewer than were conscripted during the spring call-up in 2005.

14 March 2006 Chechen Prime Minister Ramzan Kadyrov orders the revival of the Ichkerian law on obligatory wearing of headscarves by women. It obligates female employees of the ministries of education, culture, finance, economic development, social sphere, the government, parliament, students of the state university and pedagogical institute, including journalists, to wear headscarves.

15 March 2006 The director of the Federal Migration Service, Konstantin Romodanovskiy, says that illegal migration inflicts colossal damage on the Russian economy. He says that annually over 20 million migrants, predominantly from the republics of the former USSR, arrive on the territory of Russia and, according to expert assessments, over 10 million of them are illegal migrants.

15 March 2006 The secretary of the Security Council of Chechnya, Khayrudi Visengiriyev says that in Chechnya the formation of two special forces battalions - South and North has been completed. They have become part of the Internal Troops of the Interior Ministry of the Russian Federation.

15 March 2006 Vladimir Putin meets the President of Ingushetia Murat Zyazikov.

17 March 2006 Rosoboronexport director-general Sergey Chemezov says the portfolio of the federal state unitary enterprise's orders totals 18bn dollars. The Russian navy is responsible for more than 50 per cent of the total volume of Rosoboroneksport purchase in 2005.

17 March 2006 Strategic Missile Troops commander Col-Gen Nikolay Solovtsov says the Topol-M mobile ICBM will be accepted for service in the near future. An initial regiment at the Teykovskoye combined-arms unit (Ivanovo Region) will take delivery of mobile Topol-M systems in 2006 for test and trial service.

17 March 2006 MOD sources say that the conscription term could be cut from two years to eighteen months in 2007.

20 March 2006 Vladimir Putin appoints Oleg Govorun head of the presidential Internal Policy Directorate. He replaces Andrey Popov.

20 March 2006 Chechen Prime Minister Ramzan Kadyrov says Chechnya should be a free economic zone.

20 March 2006 Vladimir Putin announces the creation of a military-industrial commission under the Russian government. It will be headed by Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov. His first deputy will be Vladislav Putilin, who will have ministerial status. Putilin used to be the head of the defence and security programmes department at the Trade and Economic Development Ministry.

20 March 2006 A Siberian Military District official delegation visits Mongolia.

21 March 2006 A petition containing over 9,000 signatures calling for the resignation of Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov has been passed to the presidential administration.

The petition was supported by the Antiwar Action Committee, the Union of Soldiers' Mothers' Committees of Russia, the Mothers' Rights foundation, the For a Democratic Alternative Civilian Service coalition and the Nord-Ost organization.

21 March 2006 The lawyers of the former head of Yukos, Mikhail Khodorkovskiy, file a complaint with the European Court of Human Rights. Lawyer Karina Moskalenko declined to comment on the substance of the complaint, in keeping with the wishes of her client.

21 March 2006 The Chechen parliament passes an appeal to the Russian leadership requesting "a change in the existing system for generating and distributing profits from oil extracted on the territory of the Chechen Republic".

21 March 2006 Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says it necessary to set up regional commands in strategic sectors.

21 March 2006 FSB Director Nikolay Patrushev is interviewed in *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* on the new anti-terrorist law.

22 March 2006 Sergey Lavrov states that a set of restrictive bills regarding foreign investment in strategic industries will not bar foreign investors from the development of Russian natural resources.

22 March 2006 Deputy Commander of the Combined Federal Force in the North Caucasus Gen Oleg Khotin says that the number of Interior Ministry troops serving in Chechnya as part of the ministry's group of forces in the North Caucasus will be reduced shortly.

22 March 2006 Vladislav Putilin, the deputy head of the newly created military-industrial commission, is interviewed in *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*.

22 March 2006 Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov denies that he intends to resign.

Sergey Ivanov says the Russian armed forces will transfer to an 18-month term of service in the spring of 2007. "The government meeting to consider transfer to a 12-month term of service as of 1 January 2008 will be held on 30 March. That is why we need a transitional period of 18-month-long service that will start in spring 2007".

Sergey Ivanov says Russia's state defence order will be worth 9bn dollars in 2006.

23 March 2006 The president of the Institute of Economic Analysis and former economic aide to Vladimir Putin, Andrey Illarionov, says Russia occupies the 190th place out of 193 countries in terms of the development of political freedoms in the past 15 years.

23 March 2006 The commanding officer of the MVD's North Caucasus District, Col-Gen Yevgeniy Vnukov, says that one Interior Ministry brigade in Chechnya has gone onto contractual manning, temporarily deployed Interior Troops in the republic will soon be withdrawn, and two locally-recruited battalions will be formed.

24 March 2006 Dmitriy Rogozin announces plans to step down as chairman of the Rodina party.

24 March 2006 The government endorses the financial guidelines for 2006-08.

According to the financial guidelines, federal budget revenue in 2006 will be R5,046,140,000,000; in 2007 it will be R5,828,480,000,000; and in 2008 it will be R6,587,440,000,000.

In 2006 federal budget expenditure will be R4,270,110,000,000; in 2007 R4,892,380,000,000; and in 2008 it will be R5,621,620,000,000.

A federal budget surplus has been planned, running at R776,030,000,000 in 2006; at R936,100,000,000 in 2007; and at R965,820,000,000 in 2008.

The financial guidelines stipulate that at the beginning of 2006 the stabilization fund should be R1,237,030,000,000; at the beginning of 2007 it should be 2,099,210,000,000; and at the start of 2008 it is to be 3,067,040,000,000.

The Russian Federation's state debt in 2006 is set at R3,413,860,000,000; in 2007 at 3,307,060,000,000; and in 2008 at 3,439,970,000,000.

24 March 2006 Chechen Prime Minister Ramzan Kadyrov says that "there will never be an armed conflict on the territory of the Chechen Republic ever again".

Chechen President Alu Alkhanov says Chechnya's leaders advocate equitable relations with Rosneft and are not proposing to take the company's subsidiary, Grozneftegas, under the control of the republic.

Alu Alkhanov says the number of acts of terrorism is going down in Chechnya.

25 March 2006 Rodina elects Aleksandr Babakov to the post of party chairman at its congress. It endorses the resignation of the previous leader, Dmitriy Rogozin.

27 March 2006 The rebel-backed Chechen President Abdul-Khalim Sadulayev is interviewed on the Kavkaz-Tsentr website.

27 March 2006 Internal Troops Commander-in-Chief Col-Gen Nikolay Rogozhkin says that by 31 December there will be no Internal Troops conscripts serving in Chechnya.

27 March 2006 The Central Bank abolishes mandatory sale of foreign currency receipts. Starting from 1 January 2007, there will be no restrictions whatsoever on foreign currency transactions.

28 March 2006 A North Ossetian rebel group, Kataeb al-Ghoul, says it will fight Russian forces.

28 March 2006 Vladimir Putin appoints interior ministers in Khakassia and Buryatia. A presidential decree appoints police Col Vladimir Ponomarev head of the Khakassia interior ministry and police Col Viktor Syusyura head of the Buryatia interior ministry.

28 March 2006 Sergey Ivanov assesses the state of the armed forces on the fifth anniversary of his appointment as defence minister. He is interviewed in *Izvestiya*.

Five years ago, 70 per cent of the Defence Ministry's budget was 'eaten away', whereas 30 per cent was spent on the development of the army. This was a period of stagnation. Now 60 per cent is 'eaten away' and 40 per cent is spent on development. In 2011, expenditure on development ought to amount to 50 per cent...In the 1996-2000 period, 40 new types of arms and hardware joined the Russian army's

inventory. This figure in 2005 was 400. Expenditure on scientific research and experimental design projects was going up apace and will continue to do so.

Ivanov says that the numerical strength of Russian armed forces will be reduced by approximately 35,000 by 1 January 2011, amounting to around 1,130,000 servicemen. The planned reductions include 300 highest officer posts, following which the number of generals and admirals would be no more than 1100. The army and navy's numerical strength was reduced by 200,000 over the past five years "and now amounts to 1,134,000 people".

"By 2008, 70 per cent of the armed forces will be manned by contract soldiers, including officers and warrant officers. This is a serious and costly programme, but the state now has the means to carry it out." In 2001 there were 95,000 families without flats in the armed forces, but now there are 71,000 such families. Expenditure on upgrading arms and equipment amounted to R117bn in 2003, whereas in 2004 this figure amounted to R144bn; in 2005 it was R187bn and in 2006 it will be R236bn.

In five years, Russia's military budget more than trebled - from R205bn to R711bn.

Sergey Ivanov says Russian armed forces now have a right to smash terrorist bases anywhere in the world. He says this "right is now enshrined in a law recently adopted by the Duma. The law officially allows the use of the armed forces beyond the confines of our national territory to fight terrorism." He says Russia has no plans to withdraw its troops from the Dniester region in Moldova, and the Black Sea Fleet would remain in Sevastopol to 2017 at least; and now there are no big rebel gangs left, the only Ministry of Defence unit left in Chechnya was the professional 42nd Motor Rifle Division.

28 March 2006 Mariya Bolshakova, chairperson of the Union of Russian Servicemen's Families all-Russia organization, says over 30 per cent of officers and warrant officers in the Russian armed forces live below the poverty line.

29 March 2006 The director of the Federal Migration Service, Konstantin Romodanovskiy, says that illegal immigration costs Russia more than R200bn annually. He says experts currently estimate there to be some 10m illegal migrants in Russia and working illegally.

30 March 2006 *Moskovskiy Komsomolets* reports that the MOD is drafting in secret a blueprint for the transition to a shorter army service starting in 2007.

30 March 2006 Dagestan's President Mukhu Aliyev says in his first message to the parliament of the republic that unemployment, the broadening gap between the rich and the poor, corruption and bribe-taking which have been spreading widely are facilitating the growth of extremism in Dagestan.

30 March 2006 The chairman of the Chechen People's Assembly, Dukuvakha Abdurakhmanov, says that all federal troops apart from border guards must be withdrawn from Chechnya.

30 March 2006 Vladimir Putin says that Russia views its nuclear deterrent as a fundamental element guaranteeing state security. “Analysis of the present international situation and the prospects for the future oblige Russia to view its nuclear deterrent as a fundamental element guaranteeing its security, and the Russian Federation's nuclear weapons industry is the material base of the state's nuclear deterrence policy.” He is attending a conference on maintaining the stable operation of the nuclear weapons industry.

Among those attending the conference are Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov; head of the presidential administration Sergey Sobyenin; Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov; Chief of the General Staff Gen Yuriy Baluyevskiy; first deputy chairman of the government's Military Industrial Commission Vladislav Putilin; FSB director Nikolay Patrushev; director of the Federal Service for Technical and Export Control Sergey Grigorov and head of Rosatom Sergey Kiriyenko.

30 March 2006 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says that in 2006 the MOD plans to recruit 25,000 contract soldiers and 60,000 more in 2007, but due to construction prices going up the federal target programme to transfer a part of the Russian armed forces to contract service will this year needs an additional R5.3bn. Sixty thousand contract soldiers joined the army in 2004 and 2005. The completion date for the GLONASS global navigation satellite system will be brought forward by two years.

31 March 2006 Vladimir Bulavin, deputy director of the FSB, says that setting up the National Antiterrorist Committee and forming regional structures has been the start of the process to create a single national security system that meets modern demands.

31 March 2006 Vladimir Putin says that Russia has exceeded the plan for arms sales in 2005 by 20 per cent. “Russia's military exports have reached yet another high - the overall plan for deliveries in 2005 was overfulfilled by 20 per cent. More than 6bn dollars' worth was delivered and this is the absolute record for the recent period. The portfolio of the Russian defence industry's orders increased significantly in the course of the year, by 61 per cent.” Russia exported military output to 61 countries in 2005.