

Russian Foreign Policy: A Chronology

April – June 2006

2 April 2006 The head of the Presidential Administrative Department, Vladimir Kozhin, says “We are actively searching for property that belonged to not only to the Soviet but to the Russian empire, too. Some considerable work has already been done and we shall claim that property.”

3 April 2006 Army General Yuriy Baluyevskiy, chief of the General Staff of the armed forces says Russia is not going to fight NATO, but it is ready to respond appropriately to anyone who attacks the Russian Federation. "Strategic parity in terms of having an equal number of missiles, aircraft and ships is becoming or has already become a thing of the past...We have no desire to tighten our belts, as happened in the past, in order to achieve numerical parity with the USA and NATO in aircraft, missiles and ships. We know that the numerical strength of NATO member states is 4m servicemen, whereas the Russian armed forces consist of 1,134,000 men.”

He says Russia was keen to cooperate with the USA in fighting terrorism. He also says that relations between Moscow and Washington are "cool" and adds that every state has its national interests in certain regions of the world. "Somebody in the USA might not like the fact that we have our interests in the former USSR states."

3 April 2006 Gazprom reports that exports of natural gas in January- February 2006 by Gazprom's export arm Gazeksport amounted to 38.69 billion cu.m., up 27.5 per cent (8.35 billion cu.m.) year-on-year. Supplies by Gazeksport to destinations outside the CIS in the first two months of 2006 mounted to 29.26 billion cu.m., up 2.6 per cent year-on-year. Supplies of gas to Western Europe in January-February increased 2.6 per cent to 21.01 billion cu.m., compared to 20.49 billion cu.m. in January-February 2005. Gas exports from Russia to Eastern Europe in the first two months of 2006 increased 2.5 per cent to 8.25 billion cu.m., compared with 8.04 billion cu.m. in the same period of 2005. Gas exports to the CIS in January-February increased 420 per cent year-on-year to 9.43 billion cu.m.

3 April 2006 State secretary of the union state Pavel Borodin says a single currency for the union state of Russia and Belarus will be introduced before the end of 2006.

4 April 2006 Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov says he will visit Saudi Arabia in May 2006. He meets Saudi National Security Council Secretary Prince Bandar Bin Sultan (Bin-Abd-al-Aziz Al Sa'ud) in Moscow.

4 April 2006 The chairman of the Duma International Affairs Committee Konstantin Kosachev criticises Iran's recent military exercises, where Iran tested a new missile the Fajr-3.

4 April 2006 The deputy chairman of Gazprom, Aleksandr Ryazanov, says Gazprom intends to at least triple the price of gas sold to Belarus.

4 April 2006 Chairman of the Duma International Affairs Committee Konstantin Kosachev says the USA is displaying double standards and a politicized approach to

trade relations with Moscow by retaining the Jackson-Vanik amendment with regard to Russia and lifting it with regard to Ukraine.

4 April 2006 Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov visits Brazil.

4-5 April 2006 Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev visits Moscow.

5 April 2006 Sergey Lavrov visits Germany.

5 April 2006 Konstantin Kosachev says the process of negotiations with Iran on setting up a joint uranium-enrichment enterprise on the territory of the Russian Federation has found itself in a blind alley, but it is possible to find a way out of it. He criticises recent military exercises by Iran.

5 April 2006 Col-Gen Viktor Yesin, a former chief of staff of the Strategic Missile Troops, says the US missile defence system will be unable to undermine the efficiency of the Russian strategic nuclear forces until 2020. He expresses concern over North Korean and Iranian nuclear plans.

Pyongyang already said last year that it had a nuclear weapon. I think this statement was not groundless: the DPRK has developed the necessary infrastructure for the creation of nuclear weapons...

Iran has not created the full-fledged infrastructure for the production of nuclear weapons. But in two or three years Tehran will fulfil its nuclear project and create an A-bomb if the world community does not stop it. I am convinced that the Iranian leadership has this intention and won't give it up voluntarily.

5 April 2006 The Baltic Fleet hosts a CIS air defence exercise.

6 April 2006 *The Caucasus Times* reports that the European Union has allocated 22 million euros for the victims of conflicts in the North Caucasus and Chechen refugees. The money will be spent on humanitarian projects of organizations that directly work with Chechen refugees in Azerbaijan, Ingushetia, Dagestan and Chechnya itself. According to EU data, of the 800,000 of Chechnya's population, 200,000 are internally displaced persons. About 25,000 Chechen refugees are living in Ingushetia, 9,000 in Dagestan and 5,000 in Azerbaijan. The EU has provided 196 million euros in humanitarian aid since the start of the Chechnya war in autumn 1999.

6 April 2006 Gazprom and Armenia sign an agreement on gas delivery. Russia will sell gas at 110 dollars per 1,000 cu.m. until 2009. Until 1 April 2006 gas was sold at 56 dollars per 1,000 cu.m.

Armenian Foreign Minister Vardan Oskanyan visits Moscow.

6 April 2006 Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili says that Russia's ban on imports of Georgian wine was a "filthy trick".

6 April 2006 Sergey Lavrov says that threats and pressure will not contribute to a resolution of Iran's nuclear problem.

We do not believe that threats and pressure will produce a positive result. We should rely on the professionalism of IAEA inspectors and do our best to enable them to continue their work in Iran...We have said that we are

ready to support the process completely and will use our own ability to influence Iran in concert with the 'European troika'.

He says the election results in Belarus and Ukraine should be respected.

6 April 2006 Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Alekseyev visits Japan. He says Russia does not blame the present extended pause in the six-party talks on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear programme either on Pyongyang or Washington, and believes the situation could be rectified on the basis of "mutually-acceptable compromises".

7 April 2006 Vladimir Putin meets the head of the Transneft company, Semen Vaynshtok, who briefs Putin on the completion of work to build the Baltic pipeline network. It will start operating at full capacity. Russian oil extracted at deposits in the north, the Urals and Siberia will now be pumped to the port of Primorsk, from where tankers will take the fuel to Europe and the USA. Up to now the crude has been exported to Western markets via ports in the Baltic countries. The Baltic pipeline system is capable of pumping up to 65 million tonnes of oil yearly.

The Sakhalinskiye Proyekty company says China is to prospect for oil deposits in the Sea of Okhotsk. The first well will be drilled on the Sakhalin shelf, as part of the Sakhalin-3 project, in summer 2006.

7 April 2006 The Foreign Ministry (MFA) welcomes the release from custody of Russian scientist Andrey Zamyatnin in Sweden.

7 April 2006 Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says that he hopes that the Iranian nuclear dossier will be settled through diplomatic efforts.

7 April 2006 The MFA urges restraint over the situation in Iraq following the terrorist act which occurred near the Shi'i mosque in Baghdad.

7 April 2006 The MFA says the Volcker Oil-for-Food Commission has not presented evidence of Russian companies being involved in the corruption scandal in relation to the UN's humanitarian programme in Iraq.

7 April 2006 Vladimir Putin speaks by telephone with French President Jacques Chirac.

7 April 2006 Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov visits Argentina.

7 April 2006 Visa requirements come into force between Russia and Moldova.

The Russian Federation's permanent representative to the OSCE, Aleksey Borodavkin, tells a meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council that Russia is concerned over the deteriorating situation in the Transdnestr region and the increased confrontation between the parties to the dispute.

7 April 2006 Russian-Tajik antiterrorist military exercises take place in Tajikistan.

7 April 2006 Lt-Gen Aytech Bizhev, the air force's deputy commander-in-chief for combined CIS air defence says that an "an active process" of creating regional air defence systems is already underway on the East European, Caucasus and Central Asian fronts. An agreement between Russia and Belarus for a single air defence zone and joint guarding of airspace borders is being drafted.

8 April 2006 Chief public health officer Gennadiy Onishchenko says that the Federal Service for Consumer Rights Protection “is open to talks with colleagues from Moldova and Georgia to resolve the situation which has recently arisen following the ban on the import of wine from those countries into Russia”.

9 April 2006 UN High Commissioner for Refugees Antonio Guterres visits North Ossetia.

9 April 2006 The head of Rosatom Sergey Kiriyyenko says Russia has accepted a proposal to join the Generation-4 project to develop nuclear reactors of a new type. Over 10 countries are involved in the project, including the USA, Canada, France and Britain. Russia has been trying for several years to join the project.

10 April 2006 Vladimir Putin complains about the delay in creating a single economic space between Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Belarus. Industry and Energy Minister Viktor Khristenko says talks on the whole package of documents setting up the single economic space would be completed by the end of 2006 and that a high-level group would be meeting in Minsk on 14 April to agree the 38 documents.

10 April 2006 Vladimir Putin appoints Andrey Denisov as first deputy foreign minister. He was Russia's envoy to the United Nations. In addition to the first deputy foreign minister, there are seven deputy foreign ministers. Grigoriy Karasin is in charge of relations with the CIS, Aleksandr Alekseyev deals with Asian issues, Aleksandr Grushko and Vladimir Titov are in charge of European cooperation issues, Sergey Kislyak deals with the American sector, Aleksandr Saltanov with the Middle East settlement and Aleksandr Yakovenko with international organizations.

10 April 2006 Chechen President Alu Alkhanov says a total of 14 people have been abducted in the Chechen Republic since the beginning of 2006. He meets a delegation headed by UNHCR Antonio Guterres. 70 abductions took place in the corresponding period of 2005.

10 April 2006 MFA spokesman Mikhail Kamynin warns that isolating the Palestinian authorities May 2006 lead to a new escalation of violence and confrontation in the Middle East. “It is impossible not to see that the isolation of the legitimate Palestinian authorities and the introduction of a blockade against them will primarily impact on the Palestinian people, further worsening the already difficult humanitarian situation in the Palestinian territories.”

He says the result of such isolation "May 2006 be governmental paralysis and chaos, and this May 2006 provoke a new surge of uncontrollable violence and confrontation...Russia initiated contact with Hamas after its victory in the parliamentary election with the aim of preventing a serious deterioration of the situation regarding the Palestinian-Israeli settlement and maintaining the prospects for moving forward the peace process as outlined in the Road Map...In doing this, we acted and will continue to act within the framework of approaches agreed by the quartet of Middle East mediators, taking into account Israel's security concerns.”

The head of the Russian delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) Konstantin Kosachev regrets the decision of the EU to end all contact with the new Palestinian parliament in the near future and France's decision to refuse to issue visas to a Palestinian delegation.

Sergey Lavrov speaks by telephone with UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. He says that there could be a meeting of the "Middle East quartet" at the end of April 2006.

10 April 2006 Sergey Lavrov Russia is not going to revise the "gas" agreement with Ukraine signed in January. He is interviewed in the Slovak newspaper *Pravda*.

10 April 2006 The former speaker of the Duma, Gennadiy Seleznev, addresses the second assembly of the Slavonic peoples of Belarus, Russia and Ukraine, in Minsk. He criticises the recent resolution on Belarus by the European Parliament as "immoral".

10 April 2006 Vladimir Putin signs an order introducing amendments to the agreement with the Republic of Kazakhstan on the use of some military facilities there. Protocols on changes and amendments to the existing bilateral agreement were signed on 4 April by Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov and Kazakh Finance Minister Natalya Korzhova. The documents were signed in the presence of the presidents of Russia and Kazakhstan, Vladimir Putin and Nursultan Nazarbayev.

10 April 2006 South Korean Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon has talks in Moscow with Sergey Lavrov. He asks for Moscow's assistance in restarting the six-sided talks on the Korean nuclear problem.

11 April 2006 Jordanian foreign minister Abd-al-Ilah al-Khatib visits Moscow.

11 April 2006 Sergey Lavrov urges Iran to cooperate in full with the IAEA. "We regard it as extremely important for Iran to cooperate in full with the IAEA in order to clarify all outstanding issues in line with the decisions of the IAEA Board of Governors." Lavrov says the Russian initiative to set up a joint uranium enrichment plant for Iran on Russian territory remains on the negotiating table. He warns against linking the nuclear issue to other issues. "Our goal is to settle the situation without damaging the nonproliferation regime. We do not have other goals. Attempts to attach irrelevant demands to the nonproliferation task will be counterproductive and will bring about a real crisis."

Russian special presidential representative for international cooperation on combating terrorism Anatoly Safonov says as yet there is no tangible evidence to back up allegations that Iran supports international terrorism. He says: "Today Iraq is in fact an 'incubator for terrorism'." He notes that now Iraq has turned into "an ideal school for terrorists", whose "graduates" will later disperse around the world and "spread the disease" of terrorism.

11 April 2006 Sergey Lavrov says that one needs to work with Hamas rather than boycott it. "We are confident that refusing the Palestinians aid only because they have elected a government which consists solely of Hamas representatives is wrong...Of course Hamas must fulfil obligations under the agreements reached, recognize Israel and come back to the negotiating table, but to achieve this one needs to work with Hamas rather than to boycott it."

11 April 2006 Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Kislyak visits Mexico. He defends Russian weapons sales to Venezuela.

12 April 2006 Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov says he is convinced the Iran nuclear problem cannot be resolved through the use of force.

I am convinced that the problem cannot be resolved through the use of force. Practically all European countries share Russia's view...If these plans do exist, as we are told in some media reports, they cannot resolve the problem, but May 2006, on the contrary, create an extremely dangerous explosive hotbed in the Middle East, which has more than enough hotbeds as it is...all participants in the negotiations, including the EU troika, Russia, the USA and China, have repeatedly spoken, in joint statements and elsewhere, of the need to resolve the Iran nuclear problem through political and diplomatic means. This was also reaffirmed recently by US President George Bush. This is what we are proceeding from. It is in this format, as well as in the framework of the IAEA, that we shall endeavour to settle this problem. Iran is well aware of our position, and I hope that it will take steps towards this position...Iran has never said it aims to possess nuclear weapons. The Iranian president has said more than once that there are no such plans, and that they intend to develop nuclear power for peaceful purposes only.

The MFA says it views with concern the statement of Iranian President Mahmud Ahmadinezhad on Iran having created a full nuclear cycle. It says this is a step in the wrong direction.

Mikhail Margelov, chairman of the Federation Council international affairs committee, says Iran should cooperate with the IAEA by fulfilling the decisions taken by its board of governors. He says "guarantees of the peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear programme are no less important for us than they are for the USA and the EU". Margelov says that Iran's announcement that it has become "a world nuclear power" and will continue work in the nuclear sphere is "not constructive".

Konstantin Kosachev, chairman of the Duma committee for international affairs, says, "this is without doubt Iran's confrontation with the international community. The events are following the worst-case scenario. Iran's response is certainly deeply disappointing, and can only leave one regretful and feeling that a realistic chance to come to an agreement, to find a compromise, has now clearly been lost because of the stand Tehran has taken."

12 April 2006 Public health chief Gennadiy Onishchenko says the ban on the import of Moldovan and Georgian wines to Russia will be lifted only when their quality is improved.

The Russian ambassador to Georgia, Vladimir Chkhikvishvili, and the Georgian parliament speaker Nino Burjanadze meet. Chkhikvishvili denies that Russia has imposed any kind of economic blockade on Georgia.

12 April 2006 Albanian Foreign Minister Besnik Mustafaj has talks with Sergey Lavrov in Moscow. They discuss Kosovo.

13 April 2006 Vladimir Putin says that Russia "is interested in attaining a just and all-embracing settlement in the Middle East". He says: "It is essential to renew the peace process on the basis of the road map and to advance consistently towards its final stop - the creation of an independent Palestinian state coexisting peacefully with Israel...In order to attain these aims, Russia is ready to continue to offer assistance to the Palestinian government and the Palestinian National Administration headed by Mahmud Abbas."

13 April 2006 The head of Rosatom, Sergey Kiriyeenko, says Iran's existing centrifuges do not allow it to enrich uranium on an industrial scale. He says that

“the enrichment of uranium in the Republic of Iran does not alarm us, there is nothing unexpected about this” He says the existence of a cascade of 164 centrifuges in Iran has been known about for a long time..

The Russian Federation's permanent representative at the UN, Andrey Denisov, says there are no grounds as yet for the adoption of any punitive measures against Iran since there is no evidence that it has failed to observe provisions of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

13 April 2006 Colonel-General Yevgeniy Maslin, the former commander of the Russian Defence Ministry's 12th Main Directorate, which is responsible for nuclear safety in the armed forces, says the deployment of US nuclear arsenals in Western European countries is groundless and increases the risk of terrorist threats. “The USA is the only country that stores nuclear warheads outside its national territory. There are no grounds for the presence of US tactical nuclear weapons in Western Europe, including Belgium, Italy and Germany, and this creates an increased terrorist threat.”

13 April 2006 The Georgian parliament unanimously ratifies the agreement on the closure of Russian military bases.

13 April 2006 Moldova asks that an extraordinary session of the CIS economic council be held in the near future to discuss the Russian ban on wine exports from Moldova.

13 April 2006 Konstantin Kosachev, chairman of the Duma Committee on International Affairs says:

If Kosovo is recognized as independent without Belgrade's agreement, for the first time in the history of post-war Europe a precedent will have been set of dismembering, dissociating an autonomous area from an integral state without the agreement of that state to do this. This will mean that other unrecognized republics will certainly go down the same road, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Nagornyy Karabakh, the Dniester Region, North Cyprus, possibly certain other regions of Europe. This is very well understood in the West. They are now attempting to put pressure on Belgrade to achieve in one form or another the agreement of the Belgrade authorities to independence for Kosovo.

13 April 2006 Ukrainian foreign minister Borys Tarasyuk makes the following comment on Russo-Ukrainian relations: “They are defined as strategic in bilateral documents. When you take into account the events at the beginning of this year, it becomes obvious that strategic partners do not behave this way.”

13 April 2006 Yuriy Solomonov, the director and general designer of the Moscow Thermal Technology Institute says that “Given the number of warheads Russia is allowed to have in accordance with the Strategic Arms Reductions Treaty, by 2015, to say nothing of 2020, the missile grouping of the Russian Strategic Nuclear Forces will have no less than 2,000 warheads.”

14 April 2006 Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Manuchehr Mohammadi visits Moscow.

Rosatom head Sergey Kiriyeenko says:

There is still a possibility of resolving the Iranian nuclear problem by diplomatic means taking into account both its interests and those of the international community...A diplomatic solution must be found because Iran has the right to develop nuclear energy, but this right must be combined with guarantees of observing the demands of other countries on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

14 April 2006 Igor Shuvalov, the president's personal representative on G8 affairs, says Russia does not plan to forgo its economic interests in order to join the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and will only join on terms it considers acceptable. He says Russia had planned to conclude all bilateral negotiations on WTO entry by the end of 2005, but "currently there remains the biggest difficulty - the USA".

14 April 2006 The Duma ratifies an agreement between the Russian Federation government and the CIS on the conditions of the presence of the Antiterrorist Centre of the CIS Countries on Russian territory, and also a protocol on amendments to the accord. The agreement was concluded in Moscow on 21 October 2003, and the protocol on 9 June 2005.

14 April 2006 Sergey Lavrov and the head of the Palestinian National Authority, Mahmud Abbas, discuss the prospects for a Palestinian-Israeli settlement over the telephone.

15 April 2006 Army Gen Yuriy Baluyevskiy, chief of the armed forces General Staff, says that what Iran has done to date does not allow it to create nuclear weapons, either in the near future or in the medium-term. He says he does view Iran's military preparations as "a threat to Russia's southern frontiers".

16 April 2006 Industry and Energy Minister Viktor Khristenko says energy security cannot be a bargaining chip at the July G8 summit in St Petersburg. He says the policy of producers and consumers of energy resources cannot be based on "energy egoism".

This is a far too risky policy for the modern world. Everybody feels the factor of energy security most acutely and is trying, on the one hand, to close up and decide everything for themselves, which is impossible. On the other hand, everybody understands that things need to be discussed on a wider platform. Ultimately, it all boils down to the fact that energy strategy and countries' ensuing policies must be openly presented and must be discussed and coordinated rather than look like strategies for fighting for one's own interests.

17 April 2006 The Duma has a round table meeting on the implementation of the four Russia-EU road maps.

17 April 2006 The MOD denies reports by some US media sources alleging that Belarus re-exports Russian S-300 surface-to-air missiles to Iran.

17 April 2006 The MFA condemns the suicide bombing in Tel Aviv. The head of the Duma's international affairs committee Konstantin Kosachev also expresses regret.

17 April 2006 Deputy Duma speaker from the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR) Vladimir Zhirinovskiy says Russia must have an aggressive foreign policy. Zhirinovskiy says that Russia faces three main external threats. One of these is being taken over by Europe. The second is the spread of Islam and the third threat is posed by China.

17 April 2006 Sergey Ivanov says that on 20 April 117 Russian servicemen will depart for Sudan to take part in a UN peacekeeping mission.

18 April 2006 Deputy Foreign Minister and Foreign Ministry's State Secretary Grigoriy Karasin visits Georgia. He warns that hastening the process of settlement in South Ossetia and Abkhazia could lead to the situation deteriorating.

18 April 2006 Deputy Foreign Minister Grigoriy Karasin visits Armenia for talks with Armenian Foreign Minister Vardan Oskanyan.

18 April 2006 A conference of representatives from Russia, the USA, China and the EU troika of Great Britain, France and Germany opens in Moscow to discuss the situation regarding Iran's nuclear programme. The conference is being held at the level of deputy foreign ministers. The Russian delegation is led by Sergey Kislyak. The MFA says Russia is against international sanctions as a means to resolve the Iranian nuclear issue. It calls on Iran to suspend its research into uranium enrichment and to cooperate with the IAEA.

18 April 2006 The head of the Federation Council international affairs committee, Mikhail Margelov, says he is disappointed by the fact that Hamas refuses to condemn the terrorist act in Tel Aviv.

18 April 2006 Minister-Delegate to the Algerian Minister of Foreign Affairs in charge of Maghreb and African Affairs, Abdelkader Messahel, visits Moscow.

18 April 2006 Grigoriy Logvinov, permanent representative of the Russian Federation at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation's (SCO) secretariat, "The SCO does not have an intention to transform itself into a military bloc. Today, however, the threat of terrorism, extremism and separatism has grown to such a large degree that it became impossible to fight against it effectively without a fully-fledged participation of armed forces."

18 April 2006 The president's aide and his personal representative for G8 matters, Igor Shuvalov, says the problems of education and energy security will be closely linked at the forthcoming G8 summit, scheduled to take place in St Petersburg this summer. He states:

Russia is the only country which has such huge hydrocarbon resources, on the one hand. On the other hand, it has a great important history of higher education, professional education, which exists now in the Russian Federation. These are, of course, Russia's pre-revolution traditions and higher education in the Soviet Union, and what we have now.

We are showing that Russia, with its tradition of innovation, can and must convert its economy in the next few years from a raw-material one to one which will be based on knowledge.

18 April 2006 Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Kislyak hands a protest note to the US ambassador in Moscow, William Burns. The document was handed over "in respect of the holding of a seminar titled 'Caucasus front of A. K. Sadulayev and the prospects of a new Nalchik' in Washington on 14 April under the aegis of American non-government organization Jamestown Foundation". The MFA believes that the

seminar was "a rostrum was provided for calls to carry out more terrorist acts on the territory of Russia".

18 April 2006 Major-General Viktor Ivanov, head of the Air Force's army aviation directorate says around 120 servicemen and four Mi-8 military transport helicopters will commence peacekeeping duties in Sudan by the end of May.

19 April 2006 ITAR-TASS reports that an Iranian delegation is in Moscow for nuclear talks. The Iranian delegation is led by Deputy Secretary of the Iranian Supreme National Security Council Javad Va'idi.

Sergey Lavrov says he believes it is too early to talk about the UN Security Council imposing sanctions against Iran. "The issue of sanctions against Iran is hypothetical, because in accordance with international law, the UN Security Council takes decisions on sanctions on the basis of certain facts, and it is the IAEA which should gather these facts."

He says Iran "must comply with the call to halt work connected with uranium enrichment". He confirms this is the common position of the six power Moscow conference (Russian Federation, USA, China, France, Germany and Great Britain) on the Iranian nuclear issue.

Yuriy Baluyevskiy, chief of General Staff of the armed forces, says Russia will meet its obligations as regards supplies of military technology to Iran. He has talks in Moscow with NATO Supreme Allied Commander in Europe James Jones. Baluyevskiy says war is not a solution to the dispute between the USA and Iran. "Iran is not planning to create nuclear weapons, and the system for monitoring nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction and missile technology exists and is demonstrating its effectiveness."

Federation Council speaker Sergey Mironov says he thinks the USA has already decided to use force against Iran. "If you listen to what US President George Bush is saying, then, judging by everything, they have already decided for themselves that Iran must be punished and they are slowly but surely moving towards that end. The sanctions which the USA wants to introduce are an attempt to provide prior justification for possible use of force."

The political directors (deputy foreign ministers) from Russia, the USA, China, Great Britain, Germany and France express concern that Iran's government has so far failed to react positively to the demands of the international community, including a demand to suspend all work linked to uranium enrichment. MFA official spokesman Mikhail Kamynin states:

Concern was noted during discussions that Iran's government has so far failed to react positively to steps being demanded of Iran in the resolution of the IAEA Board of Governors of 4 February and which are reaffirmed by the statement issued by the chairman of the UN Security Council on 29 March, including the suspension of all work linked to enrichment and chemical processing.

19 April 2006 The Duma votes by 349 votes to two to support the ban on Georgian and Moldovan drinks.

19 April 2006 New Zealand foreign minister Winston Peters visits Russia.

19 April 2006 Valeriy Zemskov, senior aide to the CSTO's secretary-general, says the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) wants to cooperate with NATO, but the alliance prefers building relations with CSTO member-countries on an individual basis.

19 April 2006 The Czech authorities arrest a Russian military attaché in Prague.

19 April 2006 The Black Sea Naval Cooperation Task Group (Blackseafor) holds a multinational exercise on fighting terrorism and the spread of weapons of mass destruction. The Navy takes part with the Black Sea Fleet's large assault ship Yamal.

19 April 2006 Yuriy Baluyevskiy says the US air base in Kyrgyzstan is a matter of bilateral relations between Bishkek and Washington.

20 April 2006 Gazprom has been offered a deal to purchase all the Turkmen gas exported towards Europe. This possibility has been discussed at talks with the Turkmen Oil and Gas and Mineral Resources Ministry. Under discussion is the purchase of 50 billion cu.m. of Turkmen gas each year for three years.

Gazprom's official representative Sergey Kupriyanov is interviewed on TV about supplying gas to Europe.

An article in *Kommersant* discusses Gazprom's European strategy.

20 April 2006 The Sakhalin Energy company signs a sale and purchase agreement with the Japanese Hiroshima Gas company which envisages the annual delivery of 210,000 t of liquefied natural gas during the next 20 years.

Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Kislyak says that Russia has said it will wait for the report of the IAEA head on the Iranian nuclear problem and is continuing the construction of the nuclear power station in Bushehr.

MFA spokesman Mikhail Kamynin says the construction of the nuclear power station at Bushehr "does not represent" any threat to the nonproliferation regime. He rejects US calls that Russia end cooperation with Iran on the construction of the Bushehr nuclear plant.

20 April 2006 Russian representative at the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) Aleksey Pogodin says Russia is allocating 10m dollars to the PNA as urgent humanitarian aid.

Anatoliy Safonov, the special envoy of Vladimir Putin, says he believes that non-recognition of Hamas will only make the situation in the region more complicated. "To give it [Hamas] a chance to become a real political force and to choose what to carry in its right hand, to take a political portfolio and to put its weapons aside. It is a point where something has to be left behind. And it is clear that this chance must be given, so this political structure can use it."

20 April 2006 Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov meets NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Europe Gen James L. Jones in Moscow. Lavrov says that Russia and NATO face the same threats. "We value this opportunity to exchange opinions on the common fundamental problems in relations between Russia and NATO, taking into account the fact that the Russian Federation understands that the common

threats that we are facing today are identical - these are terrorism, combating non-proliferation (sic) and drugs trafficking. We can only fight these threats together.”

Sergey Ivanov, deputy prime minister and defence minister, warns that, in the event of the violation by the North Atlantic alliance of the balance of forces next to the Russian Federation's borders, Moscow reserves the right to take measures to ensure national security. Ivanov believes that the deployment of new NATO military units in Poland and the Baltic countries May 2006 conflict with the obligations of the alliance. “In the event of a clear violation of the balance of forces near our borders, we reserve the lawful right to take all necessary measures to ensure the reliability of our national security.” He is interviewed in Belarusian newspaper *Sovetskaya Belorussiya*.

20 April 2006 The Russian co-chairman of the intergovernmental Russian-Kyrgyz commission for trade, economic and technical cooperation and Russian Federation Federal Atomic Energy Agency head, Sergey Kiriyenko, visits Bishkek for talks with his Kyrgyz counterpart Prime Minister, Feliks Kulov.

Sergey Kiriyenko says the cooperation between Russia and Iran does not pose any threat to the rules and regulations governing the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

21 April 2006 Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister of the Russian Federation Sergey Ivanov expresses concern that the foreign political situation around Iran might affect Russian security.

The MFA expresses its opposition to imposing sanctions against Iran. “We can talk about sanctions only when facts emerge which will prove that Iran is not involved in a solely peaceful nuclear programme.” It also states that Russia's stance on Iran's nuclear programme has not changed: “This means observing the nuclear non-proliferation regime, implementing the IAEA Board of Governors resolution as well as following the provisions outlined in the UN Security Council chairman's statement.”

Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Kislyak also states:

It is too soon to be talking about sanctions at all because first we need to see the report by the head of the IAEA, which should be published by the end of the month...Russia's position on the effectiveness of sanctions is generally well known - throughout the history of UN-applied sanctions the specific problem for which they were imposed has almost never been resolved...Our task is to promote a solution to the problem of the nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction. That's what our strategy should be aiming at. The mechanism for this is primarily the IAEA...

We believe that a military conflict is impermissible and that it is impossible to resolve Iran's non-proliferation problems by any military means. Therefore we are categorically against the use of force in this issue and we will be proceeding from this in all our work.

Security Council Deputy Secretary Nikolay Spasskiy says the Russian proposal to set up a joint facility to enrich uranium for Iran "unquestionably remains on the negotiating table...Even now there remains a chance, a normal, solid chance of a peaceful, diplomatic solution to the Iranian nuclear problem." He says that there are currently no obstacles to further Russo-Iranian military-technical cooperation.

21 April 2006 CIS Interior Ministers meet in Tajikistan.

21 April 2006 CIS Foreign Ministers meet in Moscow. Sergey Lavrov rejects Georgian and Moldovan objections to Russia's ban on their wine exports.

21 April 2006 Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Kislyak says Russia will make efforts to continue the negotiating process to reduce strategic nuclear armaments.

21 April 2006 Vladimir Putin signs the federal law "On the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism". The law was adopted by the Duma on 24 March and approved by the Federation Council on 7 April.

21 April 2006 Sergey Ivanov visits Belarus to discuss the creation of a unified air defence system.

22 April 2006 Vladimir Putin telephones new Italian prime minister Romano Prodi to congratulate him on winning the parliamentary election.

22 April 2006 Oleg Ozerov, deputy director of the MFA's Middle East and North Africa department, warns that Hamas' refusal to fulfil the demands of international mediators May 2006 result in a large-scale military conflict between Palestine and Israel. He also discusses Russian policy towards Iraq.

24 April 2006 ITAR-TASS quotes a Kremlin source as saying that "Moscow is categorically opposed to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and categorically opposed to Iran having the technical knowledge that would allow it to become a nuclear power. "It is a different matter how this aim can be achieved tactically. Russia has differences of opinion with the USA on this issue...the scenario involving use of force is categorically unacceptable to us."

The deputy prime minister and defence minister, Sergey Ivanov, visits China. He says Russia's construction of a nuclear power station at Bushehr bears no relation to the problem of proliferation of WMD. He says Moscow will honour in full its contract to supply Tehran with Tor-M1 air defence missiles.

Ivanov says that the SCO is not planning to transform itself into a military-political alliance.

Ivanov says Russia is not yet considering the issue of withdrawing from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty of 1987, although he says that the treaty is a Cold War relic.

Ivanov says he doubts that the Russian-Ukrainian project to manufacture the An-70 military transport plane can be carried out.

24 April 2006 The MFA welcomes the appointment of Jawad al-Maliki as head of the Iraqi government.

24 April 2006 Federation Council speaker Sergey Mironov criticizes US policies in the Middle East. He says the US is exercising a "political diktat" and acts proceeding from the principle "I spare those I like and punish those I don't". Mironov meets Egypt's People's Assembly Speaker Ahmad Surur.

24 April 2006 Kyrgyz President Kurmanbek Bakiyev visits Moscow for talks with Vladimir Putin.

25 April 2006 The CIS Unified Air Defence System holds an exercise. Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Ukraine will be taking part in the exercises, designed to hone interaction in intercepting aerial intruders of the CIS airspace and to fight aerial terrorism.

25 April 2006 Vladimir Putin condemns the terrorist bombings in Egypt. Sergey Lavrov offers Egypt assistance following the bombing.

25 April 2006 Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov, in China, says that military-technical cooperation in relations between Russia and China "are experiencing consistent and dynamic development". He says that Russian and Chinese positions on Iran are almost identical.

Ivanov says Russia will establish two alpine brigades in the Caucasus to guard the border with Georgia. He says he aims to time the withdrawal of bases from Georgia by 2008 with establishing two modern alpine brigades on Russian territory.

Ivanov has talks with Uzbek defence minister Ruslan Mirzayev in Beijing.

25 April 2006 The acting prime minister of Thailand, Thaksin Shinawatra, visits Moscow.

25 April 2006 Chairman of the Duma Committee on International Affairs Konstantin Kosachev says Iran can cooperate with other countries in the area of nuclear technologies in the civilian sphere, if this takes place under the control of the IAEA. He is commenting on the statement by Ayatollah Ali Khamene'i to the effect that Iran is ready to share its atomic technologies.

25 April 2006 A Russian Start-1 booster rocket, launched from Russia's Far Eastern cosmodrome at Svobodnyy in Amur Region, has successfully placed an Israeli commercial, remote-sensing satellite EROS B1 in its designated orbit.

25 April 2006 Rosoboroneksport signs a cooperation agreement with Cuban firm Tecnoimport.

25 April 2006 Lukoil head Vagit Alekperov says that LUKoil intends to increase its production of oil in Kazakhstan to 10 million tonnes by 2010.

25 April 2006 Uzreport.com reports that LUKoil has struck a new gas deposit in central Uzbekistan.

26 April 2006 The deputy chairman of the Gazprom board of directors, Aleksandr Medvedev, expresses concern about Gazprom's relations with the EU. European Commission head Jose Manuel Barroso indicated during his recent visit to Moscow that Gazprom's activities in Europe might be investigated.

26 April 2006 The MFA says Russia expects Georgia to take steps to safeguard the withdrawal of hardware from the Russian military base in Akhalkalaki.

Georgian Foreign Minister Gela Bezhuashvili says that relations with Russia are complicated by confusion over Russia's interests in Georgia and a difference in "values" between the two countries.

The deputy commander of the joint peacekeeping force in the Georgian-Ossetian conflict zone, Vladimir Ivanov, says Georgian military police have illegally detained a Russian peacekeepers' vehicle.

26 April 2006 The Federation Council approves the law on ratification of the treaty on allied relations between Russia and Uzbekistan.

26 April 2006 Vladimir Putin has talks with German Chancellor Angela Merkel in Tomsk.

26 April 2006 SCO defence ministers meet in Beijing. Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov proposes that a document setting out the concept for cooperation between defence ministries in the framework of the SCO be developed.

Ivanov says that the defence ministers of the member states of the SCO have accepted the Russian proposal to hold an anti-terrorism exercise on its territory in 2007. It will be held in the Volga-Urals Military District.

27 April 2006 Finance Minister Aleksey Kudrin says Russia is ready to pay Germany 9.5 billion dollars to clear the former USSR's debt in full in accordance with Paris Club terms. Vladimir Putin says that Russia is planning to pay off its debt to the Paris Club completely in 2006.

27 April 2006 The chief medical hygiene officer, Gennadiy Onishchenko, says he supports the ban on importing Georgian and Moldovan wines.

27 April 2006 Industry and Energy Minister Viktor Khristenko says that the Eastern Siberian-Pacific Ocean pipeline project would be completed on time, by the end of 2008.

27 April 2006 At the Russo-German summit in Tomsk, Vladimir Putin talks about easing the access of foreign investors to energy deposits.

Our aim is not to limit foreign investors' access, including access to major deposits, but to liberalize this process, to make it more transparent and regulated not so much by administrative decisions, but more to transfer this process into the realm of civil law. We have hydrocarbon deposits, which, for example, in single field can contain the same amount as all of Canada. Naturally, such volumes mean the government must pay this area particular attention.

Putin calls on Europe to agree on the general rules of the game on the energy markets. "When people come to us, this is seen as investment, as globalization, but if it is we who want to make the move, it's seen as Russian companies expanding." He complains about Europeans expressing concern about energy dependence on Russia.

Why raise the tension, what fears about the increasing dependence on Russia are we talking about if the situation in the world has fundamentally changed? Try to understand us - how are we supposed to react when we hear this sort of thing? We start to look for other markets...For us, Europe is the natural and the closest partner. But when we start to hear the same old thing we start to see it as a threat that our access to markets will be limited and we start to take action.

He says he is pleased that the British energy minister has dismissed concerns about Gazprom's interest in Centrica.

At the Russian-German summit in Tomsk, an agreement is signed between Gazprom and the BASF chemical company. The companies will exchange assets as part of the project to exploit southern Russian gas deposits. This is the first direct involvement by the German concern in developing gas deposits in the far north, the Russko-Yuzhnoye gas deposit not far from Yamal. Up to 25 billion cubic metres of gas a year is to be extracted there. The partnership is envisaged for up to 30 years. A total of eight agreements are signed. Vladimir Putin states:

As for the deal between Gazprom and BASF, we welcome it. From my point of view, this is the best example of how the Russian Federation and Russian companies are ready for deep, comprehensive cooperation with their European partners, including their German partners. I repeat once again that this is the first step of its kind in our history, in which we are allowing our foreign partners to extract gas from enormous deposits that will be worked for decades. But this is not even the most important thing. The most important thing is that we have encountered an equal attitude towards partnership with us. An independent audit of assets was conducted and the exchange of assets has been carried out, and in doing this, through these assets, BASF has given Gazprom the chance to take a serious role in the distribution and transport of gas in Germany. And all of this is on a basis of taking mutual interests into account. We will, of course, respond in kind to partners who work with us on this basis...

Russia's energy cooperation with Europe is not two or three years old, but already decades old...Even during the Cold War, when the confrontation between the two systems had them teetering on the brink of nuclear world war, Russia, or the Soviet Union as it was then, unflinching day after day, hour after hour met its commercial contracts with all its European partners.

So, what are the fears we are talking about today? Why today, now the world situation has fundamentally changed, raise fears about increasing dependence on Russia? And we constantly hear about some kind of excessive dependence on Russia, about how there is a need to limit the access of Russian energy resources to the European market. And what about us? Imagine yourself in our place, what should we do in this position when every day we hear the same thing? We start looking for other markets.

This doesn't mean that we intend to limit trade with Europe. For us Europe is naturally the most suitable partner and, by the way, has been quite reliable so far. But when we constantly hear the same thing over and over again, we begin to see this as a threat to limit our access to this market and start to search for others. I don't think this is in anyone's interests.

When people come to us, this is investment and globalization, but if it is we who want to make the move, then this is the expansion of Russian companies. We must somehow reach an agreement on the general rules of the game.

The chairman of the Duma Committee on International Affairs, Konstantin Kosachev, warns that attempts to use artificial methods to reduce the amount of Russian gas supplied to Europe may result in considerable economic losses for European partners. "It may turn out that at a certain moment it will become not interesting for Russia to supply gas to Europe only."

Sergey Lavrov says that Russia does not intend to use its raw materials as a lever for exerting pressure on other countries. "It is better to raise the issue of finding the optimum balance of interests between countries that are producers of energy resources and countries that are consumers of energy resources than to assert that we apparently intend to use our natural wealth as a kind of lever for asserting pressure on other countries." Lavrov says that Russia is currently discussing possible forms of involvement of companies from interested European countries in the development of hydrocarbon deposits in Russia.

The German and Russian economy ministers (Michael Glos and German Gref respectively) praise Russia as a reliable supplier of energy resources. Russian Economic Development and Trade Minister German Gref says that: "We hope that over at least the next 30-40 years nothing will happen and no-one will have any reason to say that Russia has become a less reliable supplier of energy resources than before."

Putin says: "Here we have achieved a new record level in trade. According to Russian estimates, our trade has closely approached the 33 billion dollar mark and, according to German estimates, the figure is much higher, over 39 billion euros. The volume of German investment in the Russian economy has gone up by more than a third. Foundations have been laid for new major joint projects in energy and industrial cooperation."

Putin says there are "various ways" of settling the Iran nuclear problem diplomatically. He says Russia will discuss this problem with the USA, her European partners and the international community. The foreign ministers of Russia and Germany, Sergey Lavrov and Frank Walter Steinmeier, advocate a peaceful solution to Iran's nuclear problem.

27 April 2006 The MFA states that the enlargement of NATO and the accession of Ukraine and Georgia to the alliance would require from Moscow significant expenditure on the reorientation of its military potential. It also expresses concern about bases in new NATO members Romania and Bulgaria. "We expect that when corresponding decisions on setting up facilities of this kind are taken, political and legal obligations of the alliance in terms of military restraint will be observed, including on not rolling out substantial combat forces on the territory of new member states."

It is also concerned over the the situation regarding the ratification of the adapted Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty. "We could not be satisfied with the situation that has come about regarding the ratification of the adapted CFE Treaty, which is the cornerstone of European security and a material basis for the relations between Russia-NATO (this is an issue for a serious discussion on the Third CFE Treaty Review Conference in Vienna at the end of May)."

28 April 2006 Sergey Lavrov visits Bulgaria. He says Russia is concerned at delays in the ratification of the CFE treaty. He attends a meeting of the Russia-NATO Council in Sofia. He says that the IAEA should be allowed to continue working in Iran. On the issue of NATO bases in Bulgaria he says: "It is for Bulgaria to decide

under what conditions foreign bases may be present on its territory. But it is certainly the case that this whole process must take full account of the international legal obligations of the North Atlantic alliance, which among other things imply the necessity of holding back the establishment of significant armed forces on the territory of new NATO members.”

He says that the lack of alternatives to independence for Kosovo "is a fairly dangerous path to take, which could lead to undesirable consequences."

28 April 2006 Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka visits Russia and has talks with Vladimir Putin in St Petersburg. Gazprom increases the price of its gas to Belarus. It suggests Belarus buy gas in 2007 for 145 dollars per 1,000 cu. m.

28 April 2006 The MFA denies media reports that saying that Russian diplomats in Tehran have stated that it is possible that Iran has nuclear weapons.

28 April 2006 The assistant general director of the Rosoboroneksport Nikolay Shvets says Rosoboroneksport is conducting negotiations on weapons supplies with a number of Latin American countries.

29 April 2006 Vyacheslav Kasymov, the executive director of the SCO Regional Antiterrorist Structure is interviewed by RIA-Novosti.

29 April 2006 Boris Simonov, the head of Rospatent, says the issue of violation of intellectual property rights is no longer an obstacle at the negotiations with the USA on Russia's accession to the WTO.

29 April 2006 The Chechen separatist president, Abdul-Khalim Sadulayev, appoints a special representative to European countries. Issa Askhabov is given additional powers to supervise and coordinate all representatives of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria in European countries.

29 April 2006 Sergey Lavrov says Iran must halt uranium enrichment work and ensure full-scale cooperation with the IAEA. He speaks by telephone with his Iranian opposite number, Manuchehr Mottaki.

The Russian Federation deputy permanent representative at the UN, Konstantin Dolgov says that Moscow sees no grounds for invoking against Iran Chapter VII of the UN Charter, which provides for the use of coercive measures. He says the UNSC's chief task now is "political support for the work of the IAEA, which should remain the principal format for the resolution of the Iran nuclear problem...The problem can only be resolved by peaceful diplomatic means on the basis of complete fulfilment of the relevant resolutions of the agency."

30 April 2006 The chairman of the Russian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Yevgeniy Primakov, is interviewed in the *Jerusalem Post*. He discusses Iran.

30 April 2006 European Commission head Jose Manuel Barroso says that the EU and USA should press Russia for open energy markets and developing democracy. He says that the Russian oil and gas are gradually becoming a political pressure tool. Sergey Kupriyanov, Gazprom spokesman, says:

Lately we have, in fact, been hearing statements about unpredictability. But this is just as true in relation to the market. We are also interested in the European market being predictable. In a situation when long-term agreements have already been signed, long-term relations have already

been established with our European partners, we hear calls for decreasing the share of the Russian gas in the European market, for restricting further advances of our gas in the markets of European countries. All this constitutes that element of unpredictability, except not by Russia, but by some European Union officials.

May

1 May 2006 US President George W. Bush telephones Vladimir Putin. They discuss Iran and Russian WTO accession. They both agree that Iran must not develop nuclear weapons.

Russia's newly appointed UN envoy Vitaliy Churkin says Russia intends to look for political and diplomatic means to solve the Iranian nuclear problem. He says the Russian side is continuing to study the report by the director-general of the IAEA, Muhammad al-Baradi'i, which was passed to the UN Security Council on 28 April.

2 May 2006 A delegation of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture led by deputy head of the Committee Mauro Palma visits the village of Tsentoroy, the native village of Chechen government head Ramzan Kadyrov. However it is not permitted to visit the prison there.

2 May 2006 Sergey Lavrov briefs Vladimir Putin on the outcome of the Russia-NATO Council meeting. He says Moscow will build its relationship with NATO "depending on where and how the alliance's reform and expansion process proceeds and how international law is observed, and with account of how Russia's interests are observed in the context of a changing geopolitical situation in the world." He complains that NATO does not want to collaborate in this area with the CSTO.

2 May 2006 The head of the directorate responsible for building the Iranian nuclear power station at the Russian company Atomstroyeksport, Vladimir Pavlov, says the first power unit of the Bushehr nuclear power station in Iran, is almost 90 per cent complete.

Chairman of the Duma International Affairs Committee Konstantin Kosachev gives a radio interview on Iran.

[Presenter] Now let's move on to Iran. What do you think Iran wants to get in the final end?

[Kosachev] I would like to be wrong, but I feel that Iran is deliberately driving towards the conflict and breaking up the relations with the IAEA. Iran is seeking an opportunity to slam the door, abrogate the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, free itself of any international commitments and then embark on its civilian or, probably, military nuclear programme.

[Presenter] Are you afraid of Iran becoming a nuclear power?

[Kosachev] Yes, I am afraid. Let me remind you that the six-party format including Russia, the USA, China, France, Britain and Germany formed on the basis of two generally recognized points of agreement. First, all six countries do not accept even hypothetically the possibility of Iran becoming a military nuclear power. And second, none of the six states fully trusts Iran and the statements of its leadership. There are certain

nuances: the Americans cast doubt on any Iranian statement, while we are more flexible and soft on Iran but we do not trust them in full either.

2 May 2006 Gazprom spokesman Sergey Kupriyanov says Gazprom does not intend to reduce the volume of gas it supplies to Europe because of increased deliveries to countries of the Asia-Pacific region. "There will be no reduction. However, as to where new, additional supplies of gas go, we will have to decide between these two markets."

2 May 2006 The MFA states that the Georgian authorities are dragging their heels over resolving the problem of refugees in Georgia-Abkhaz conflict zone. The MFA states that the issue of refugees and displaced persons was one of the main issues in finding a settlement to the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict. In October 2005 a meeting of the Sochi working group on returning refugees discussed the issue of rechecking information concerning the registration of refugees returning to Gali District in Abkhazia.

3 May 2006 Sergey Mironov, the chairman of the Federation Council, says that if Georgia withdraws from the CIS, it will not influence the situation in the CIS.

The Russian withdrawal from the Akhalkalaki base in Georgia begins. The base in Gudauta was closed in 2001. The Georgian MFA says that Russia is misleading the OSCE about the Gudauta base.

3 May 2006 The Russian Federation representative at the UN, Vitaliy Churkin, says the planned UN Security Council resolution on the Iranian nuclear problem "should contain nothing that could allow it to be used as a pretext for threatening the use of force to resolve it".

3 May 2006 Deputy Foreign Minister Grigoriy Karasin says that Moscow categorically rejects the idea of reconsidering the lease schedule and the rent it pays for its Black Sea Fleet in Ukraine.

Duma Deputy Aleksandr Lebedev sends a letter to Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, the NATO secretary-general, in which he has drawn his attention to Ukraine's nonconformity with criteria that are essential to join the alliance.

4 May 2006 Andrey Kokoshin, the head of the Duma CIS Affairs Committee, criticises US vice-president Dick Cheney's speech in Vilnius warning about Russia's move away from democracy. Similar comments are made by the first deputy chairman of the Duma's international affairs committee, Leonid Slutskiy. Cheney was speaking at a summit of the leaders of the Baltic and Black Sea regions.

4 May 2006 The Russian-Ukrainian subcommission on the functioning of the Black Sea Fleet meets in Moscow. The talks are described as difficult.

4 May 2006 Chief public health officer and head of the Federal Service for Consumer Rights Protection, Gennadiy Onishchenko, bans the import of Georgian-produced Borjomi mineral water to Russia.

The MOD denies the Georgian Foreign Ministry's statement that several Russian peacekeepers on 3 May broke into the house of a resident of the Gali District centre and wounded a young man who was inside.

4 May 2006 The MFA says it will provide emergency financial assistance to the Palestinian National Authority to the amount of 10m dollars. The MFA says the use of the money will be strictly monitored.

4 May 2006 A Duma delegation visits Pakistan.

4 May 2006 A protocol on the creation of an international consortium of Black Sea railways is signed in Moscow by representatives of the Russian Railways open joint-stock company, Georgian Railways open joint-stock company, Armenian Railways closed joint-stock company and Abkhaz railway.

5 May 2006 Gen Vladimir Pronichev, the first deputy director of the Federal Security Service and head of the Federal Border Guard Service, and Japan Coast Guard commandant Admiral Hiroki Ishikawa sign a joint protocol on cooperation following talks in Vladivostok.

5 May 2006 Sergey Lavrov says that all efforts of the international community for settling the Iran nuclear problem should be aimed at ensuring further activities of the IAEA in Iran. "We have always cited IAEA conclusions which said that inspections carried out in Iran up to now do not allow one to conclude that Iran has the technology to produce weapons of mass destruction. On the other hand, these inspections do not allow one to draw the opposite conclusion - that Iran does not have the capability."

5 May 2006 Sergey Lavrov criticises the Community of Democratic Choice Vilnius summit where US Vice President Dick Cheney criticised Russia's democratic record.

Sergey Lavrov has talks in Moscow with Foreign Minister of Bosnia-Herzegovina Mladen Ivanic. They discuss the Hague Tribunal, economic and energy cooperation.

Sergey Lavrov meets the president of the unrecognized Transdneestr Republic, Igor Smirnov. He says Russia is intent on helping to resolve the situation that has arisen since the imposition by Moldova and Ukraine of new rules for declaring cargo on the Dniester sector of their shared border.

6 May 2006 Sergey Lavrov makes the following comment on US Vice President Dick Cheney's criticism of democracy in Russia:

What I can agree with Mr Cheney about is his desire to see the world as a community of sovereign democracies. Russia wants to be and is becoming a sovereign, strong and stable democracy and expects to be seen as such on the world arena, as an equal partner, a partner without whom not even one - I am not exaggerating - not even one global problem can be tackled today.

Sergey Lavrov has telephone talks with US State Secretary Condoleezza Rice.

6 May 2006 Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Kislyak says that the draft resolution on Iran tabled at the UN Security Council needs considerable adjustment.

Kislyak says the Russian proposal on establishing a joint venture with Iran for uranium enrichment on Russian territory remains on the table. He says Russia "has proposed that Iran freeze the uranium enrichment activities for the period of its work with the IAEA on restoring confidence in Iran's nuclear programme".

6 May 2006 Sergey Lavrov writes an article in the magazine *Russia in Global Politics*. He defends contacts with Hamas, and denies that Russia pursues an anti-US policy.

6 May 2006 First Deputy Prime Minister Dmitriy Medvedev visits Uzbekistan. He meets President Islam Karimov. The sides discuss military-technical, economic and energy cooperation.

8 May 2006 The foreign ministers of the six (P5 plus Germany) meet in New York to discuss Iran.

9 May 2006 Sergey Lavrov says Russia's position on "the Iran nuclear dossier remains clear and unchanged". He says that there is no need for a debate within Chapter VII of the UN Charter, allowing the imposition of sanctions and the use of military force against an offending country, in the context of work on a resolution about Iran. He says if Iran "cooperates with the IAEA, the Iranian nuclear problem can undoubtedly be resolved." He says that "the resolution itself was not discussed, it is being considered by the permanent ambassadors to the UN and the foreign ministries' political directors". "Iran should understand of course that its failure to respond to persistent calls which are being addressed to it is not facilitating the settlement of this very serious problem."

9 May 2006 Sergey Lavrov says that Russia is in favour of continuous contacts with the Hamas leadership and is against its isolation.

For Hamas to realize its political responsibility, it is necessary to work with it all the time. Isolation is a route into deadlock...There have been positive signs on the side of Hamas. Hamas has said that it will recognize the Arab peace initiative if it is recognized by Israel, will adhere to the cease-fire, and is ready for Palestinian National Authority leader Mahmud Abbas to enter into political contact with the new prime minister of Israel.

He says that the Middle East quartet of international mediators had discussed developments in Palestine with the foreign ministers of Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Jordan, and noted that it was necessary to convince Hamas to recognize Israel and to begin talks with the Israeli side.

10 May 2006 Sergey Lavrov says that "the isolation of Hamas is a blind alley". He says that Palestinian aid spending should be monitored. He also says that Russia intends to continue assisting the political settlement in Darfur.

10 May 2006 Chairman of the Duma International Affairs Committee Konstantin Kosachev is interviewed on Vladimir Putin's state of the nation address. He states that:

We are a country where 2 per cent of the world population controls 13 per cent of its land. This imbalance will always be attractive, including to our external rivals and opponents. They will always feel tempted to try and make their way inside, to gain access to our resources and control our economy, and maybe, even our policy. Without tackling our demographic problem we will not lose that imbalance. This is why this dimension no doubt has both inner and outer political significance.

[Presenter] Yes, but the president says that we must be ready to answer any attempts at foreign political pressure on Russia. Who in the world is trying to pressurize us? Shall we line up our submarines with strategic nuclear weapons against terrorism?

[Kosachev] Of course not. We line up our submarines with nuclear strategic weapons against hypothetical threats linked with, let us say, global pressure against Russia in order to make Russia more agreeable in other spheres, for instance, in the economic sphere. The idea is being voiced that natural resources do not have national borders and belong to the whole of mankind. If we are to follow this logic, sooner or later someone will declare that Russian oil, Russian gas and Russian timber, Russian fish are used by a mere 2 per cent of the population and this is not fair, so let us use them together. So who knows what will follow?

[Presenter] But who says this?

[Kosachev] There are some political circles in the West who are quite serious about all this and begin to talk about it at various international forums.

[Presenter] But in fact this sounds like another Cold War.

Kosachev later states: "In one of the previous addresses the president stated that at present Russia has no enemies in the world. I agree with this statement. But sadly I can continue this sentence and say that in fact Russia has no real allies either."

10 May 2006 The Security Council secretary, Igor Ivanov, says that Vladimir Putin's address to the Federal Assembly proposes adjustments to military doctrine and foreign policy concepts, which in turn means changes to the national security doctrine.

10 May 2006 Russia's permanent representative at the UN, Vitaliy Churkin, says the meeting of the foreign ministers of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and Germany held in New York has "totally changed the atmosphere" of the talks on the Iranian nuclear problem. He says that instead of discussing how much time Iran should be given to stop its uranium enrichment programme, the six countries are concentrating efforts on drawing up a set of incentives for Tehran in order to try to attain a peaceful solution to the crisis concerning its nuclear programme.

11 May 2006 A high-level delegation from Iran's Atomic Energy Organization arrives in Moscow for talks with leaders of Rosatom.

11 May 2006 The secretary of the Security Council, Igor Ivanov, says he believes that there is no political or military justification for Georgia's and Ukraine's accession to NATO.

Igor Ivanov warns against military action against Iran. He says that NATO and the USA must do more in Afghanistan to counter the Taleban and the drugs problem.

11 May 2006 Vladimir Putin signs the federal law "On ratifying the treaty on alliance relations between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Uzbekistan" passed by the Duma on 21 April 2006 and approved by the Federation Council on 26 April. The treaty was signed in Moscow on 14 November 2005.

11 May 2006 Chief of the General Staff of the Armed forces Yuriy Baluyevskiy warns of USA's desire for monopoly status.

Monopolism of a single superstate, the USA, based on vast military strength and immense material resources, may take the world down a blind alley...You and I can already see the first 'results' in Iran and in parts of the former USSR, particularly in Central Asia and the Transcaucasus. The US leadership, without concealing its desire to be the leader of the world and without asking anyone else, has already made itself both the captain and the helmsman in the process of transforming the world.

12 May 2006 The MFA denies claims that that a delegation from the NATO Parliamentary Assembly was not allowed into Gudauta base in Georgia.

12 May 2006 A Russian-French joint naval exercise on communication and manoeuvring begins in the Pacific near Vladivostok.

13 May 2006 Vladimir Putin says that Russia will patiently build its relations with the West and will not return to the period of the Cold War. "As long as people don't shove their noses into other people's affairs or declare the whole world their own sphere of influence, then we have quite enough of our own existing resources to ensure our own security absolutely reliably, in spite of any promising developments of theirs."

13 May 2006 Kyrgyz Prime Minister Feliks Kulov, who co-chairs the commission, says the next meeting of the Russian-Kyrgyz intergovernmental commission on trade and economic cooperation will be held in Omsk at the end of June 2006. Kulov is in Moscow on a two-day working visit during which he is holding talks on the implementation of agreements reached during Kyrgyz President Kurmanbek Bakiyev's official visit to Russia in April.

13 May 2006 The deputy commander-in-chief of the Russian Ground Troops, Vladimir Bulgakov, says that the Russian military considers relations with NATO to be those of partners. He says also that "there are also conflict points, on which we cannot agree in principle if they concern national interests of our state".

13 May 2006 The Russian armed forces begins withdrawing equipment from its military base in Akhalkalaki, Georgia.

14 May 2006 A Russian military delegation led by the chief of the General Staff of the Armed forces, Gen Yuriy Baluyevskiy, visits France.

14 May 2006 Head of the Palestinian National Authority Mahmud Abbas arrives in Sochi for talks with Vladimir Putin on 15 May.

15 May 2006 The chairman of the Federation Council international affairs committee Mikhail Margelov says the main aim of collaboration between Russia and the EU "could be the setting up an association some time in the future". He says the "association does not mean subsequent EU membership for Russia".

15 May 2006 A meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization opens in China.

16 May 2006 Sergey Lavrov visits China for the SCO foreign ministers summit. He says Russia and China will not support a UN Security Council resolution if it allows for the imposition of sanctions or, especially, the use of force, against Iran. Lavrov calls for a resumption of the six-party talks on the North Korean nuclear issue.

16 May 2006 The MFA rejects claims that Russia is not living up to its commitments to the Council of Europe.

16 May 2006 The head of Gazprom, Aleksey Miller, and Bulgarian Economy and Energy Minister Rumens Ovcharov note at a meeting in Moscow that it will be necessary to switch to market prices for the transit of Russian gas in the future.

17 May 2006 Sergey Lavrov says that Iran must show a constructive attitude towards the proposals being drafted by Russia, the USA, the EU and China.

17 May 2006 Sergey Lavrov has talks with Sudanese foreign minister Lam Akol in Moscow. He says Russia intends to continue its participation in the UN peacekeeping operation in Sudan. He expresses his support for a peace agreement signed between the Sudanese government and one of the three opposition groups in the Nigerian capital city of Abuja on 5 May.

He also says that it is dangerous to attempt to isolate Hamas.

18 May 2006 Russia becomes chairman of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe for the next six months.

18 May 2006 Chief of the General Staff of the armed forces Yuriy Baluyevskiy calls on his CSTO counterparts to improve cooperation between the general and main staffs of the member states' armed forces. He speaks at a meeting of the chiefs of the CSTO main and general staffs.

18 May 2006 Rosoboroneksport says Russia does not intend to reduce its military-technical cooperation with Venezuela just because that is what the USA wants.

18 May 2006 Sergey Lavrov and deputies from the European Parliament international affairs committee in Strasbourg discuss the Iran nuclear programme, the Middle East and the situation concerning Russian-speaking minorities in the Baltic states. He says "agreements on a new document were reached at the meeting which could establish a legal foundation for Russia-EU cooperation, replacing the current partnership and cooperation agreement. This agreement was signed 10 years ago and no longer reflects the actual level of our cooperation."

Sergey Lavrov meets the UN secretary-general's special envoy for Kosovo, Martti Ahtisaari. He says that any attempts "to set deadlines for a solution to the problem of Kosovo cannot be supported". He says, "Artificial deadlines and targets cannot provide a stable outcome, and nor can the imposition of any decisions...There is only one option for a settlement - exclusively on the basis of accords between Belgrade and Pristina."

18 May 2006 Yuriy Baluyevskiy criticises possible US plans to use ICBMs with non-nuclear warheads.

19 May 2006 Vladimir Putin in Sochi receives the leader of Lebanon's parliament majority Sa'd al-Hariri.

19 May 2006 Sergey Lavrov says that Moscow is convinced that the Iran nuclear problem can be settled exclusively through direct talks. "Iran should realize that we are not trying to have this country isolated, and that we want it to be involved in cooperation within the frame of international law and cooperation with the IAEA."

19 May 2006 The MFA says that the way towards accord and stability in Palestine lies through dialogue between all political parties and movements, as proposed by Palestinian National Authority head Mahmud Abbas. The MFA states:

We call on all the Palestinian political forces to renounce the dangerous logic of confrontation, exercise common sense and restraint, and join forces to establish public order and strengthen internal security. This will make it possible to fulfil the tasks that the Palestinians themselves are faced with on ways to make the work of the Palestinian National Authority's government structures effective, and will give succour to the international community's efforts to provide assistance to the Palestinian population and to put the Palestinian-Israeli peace process back on track.

19 May 2006 The Russian Orthodox church of St Catherine the Martyr is consecrated in Rome. Metropolitan Kirill meets Pope Benedict XVI.

19 May 2006 Sergey Lavrov hands the secretary-general of the Council of Europe a document on Russia's ratification of the Council of Europe convention on preventing terrorism.

19 May 2006 Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov speaks at a news conference after the session of the Interstate Council of the Eurasian Economic Community. He says that although Russia believes that it is worthwhile to keep the CIS in existence, it will not force other countries to remain in the organization against their will.

19 May 2006 Sergey Lavrov and Ukrainian foreign minister Borys Tarasyuk have talks on the Black Sea Fleet and Transdnestr.

19 May 2006 Aleksandr Denisov, first deputy director of the Federal Service for Military-Technical Cooperation, says that Russian arms and military equipment exporters do not expect their trade volumes with India and China to reduce in the foreseeable future.

20 May 2006 Vladimir Putin meets Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev in Sochi. They discuss energy and military-technical cooperation.

20 May 2006 Rodina deputy Aleksandr Krutov calls for a law to establish the date of the end of the war between the Soviet Union and Japan. A draft law has been submitted to the Duma.

21 May 2006 Sergey Lavrov visits Saudi Arabia. Russia and Saudi Arabia agree the formation of a joint group to fight international terrorism.

They urge the resumption of direct talks between Israel and the Palestinians.

Sergey Lavrov welcomes the formation of a new government in Iraq.

Sergey Lavrov says Russia opposes sanctions against Tehran.

Sergey Lavrov says the strategic interests of Russia and the USA in the Middle East coincide. “Above all, these are stability in the region and the inadmissibility of this territory being used for destabilizing the situation and feeding extremist movements and terrorism.”

22 May 2006 Chechen President Alu Alkhanov accuses the USA of pursuing a policy of double standards over terrorism.

22 May 2006 Sergey Lavrov is interviewed in Austrian journal *Profil*. He says that in order to win recognition from the international community, the Hamas movement must reciprocate by abandoning the use of force, recognizing the state of Israel and observing previous peace agreements between the Palestinians and the Israelis. He says that in the event of the crisis over Iran's nuclear programme being settled, Russia would not object to Tehran enriching uranium for peaceful nuclear energy purposes under IAEA control.

22 May 2006 Igor Ivanov, the secretary of the Security Council, meets Sa'd al-Hariri, the leader of the Lebanese parliamentary majority, in the Kremlin.

22 May 2006 First Deputy Chairman of the Duma Lyubov Sliska says that Russia should respect the Montenegrin independence referendum.

22 May 2006 Deputy Prosecutor-General Vladimir Kolesnikov has said that former Georgian security chief Igor Giorgadze may be granted political refugee status in Russia.

22 May 2006 Deputy Prime Minister Aleksandr Zhukov says Russia will increase its energy supplies to Europe.

23 May 2006 Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov states: “The country's economic development in the foreseeable future will largely depend on the stable functioning and development of the energy sector and its raw material base. Moreover, Russia's role as a supplier of energy resources is growing. There are known obligations before our foreign partners as regards this issue, and certain intentions were declared, the fulfilment of which will determine the international image of our country.”

23 May 2006 Sergey Lavrov visits Kuwait and Doha. He says the efforts of the European troika, Russia, the USA and China to settle the Iran nuclear problem will make no sense if Iran itself is isolated from the process.

23 May 2006 Rosatom head Sergey Kiriyyenko visits the USA.

23 May 2006 The MFA says it hopes for good ties with both Montenegro and Serbia. It says it respects the choice of the people of Montenegro, most of whom voted for independence in the 21 May referendum.

23 May 2006 The president of Transdnestr Igor Smirnov, and Deputy Prime Minister Aleksandr Zhukov sign an agreement which would enable the Transdnestr region to break the economic blockade caused by Ukraine and Moldova introducing in March new transit regulations for Transdnestr commodities crossing the border.

23 May 2006 Deputy Premier and Minister of Defence Sergey Ivanov meets Liang Guanglie, member of the Central Military Commission and chief of general staff of the Chinese People's Liberation Army, who is visiting Russia.

A Russo-Chinese anti-terrorist exercises is held in the Moscow region.

23 May 2006 The ninth plenary meeting of the Russian-Kazakh intergovernmental cooperation commission's sub-commission on the Baykonur complex takes place at the Baykonur cosmodrome.

24 May 2006 Rosatom head Sergey Kiriyenko says the fundamental approaches of the USA and Russia to a solution of the Iranian question are identical.

24 May 2006 Presidential aide Sergey Yastrzhembskiy says that Russia and the EU have resolved their differences on the TACIS programme. Under this programme the EU is switching from the provision of humanitarian aid in the North Caucasus to a programme for the development of the North Caucasus.

24 May 2006 The head of the General Staff of the Armed Forces General Yuriy Baluyevskiy says Russia's intercontinental ballistic missiles are capable of overcoming any existing and potential missile defence systems, including the planned US missile defence system in Eastern Europe.

24 May 2006 Russian heavy military hardware - tanks and infantry fighting vehicles - withdrawn from the Russian base in Georgia arrives in Armenia.

25 May 2006 A Russia-EU summit takes place in Sochi. Vladimir Putin has talks with EU leaders - Jose Manuel Barroso, Wolfgang Schuessel and Javier Solana. They discuss visa regimes and energy relations.

Vladimir Putin says that:

The USA is one of our most important partners. We value relations with this country. I am sure there are plenty of political forces in the USA that take a similar line to developing relations with Russia

There are many other areas as well, including the fight against terrorism, where nothing could replace the partnership between Russia and the USA.

I am sure that a considerable number of our partners in the USA, including the president of that country, have the same understanding.

He says the USA is an important partner for Russia in the economy and the disarmament sphere and in the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, their components and missile technology.

Putin expresses surprise over US criticism of Russo-Ukrainian gas relations.

25 May 2006 The Georgian MFA sends a protest note to the Russian MFA, demanding explanations from Russia over the statements expressing readiness to grant political asylum to Igor Giorgadze.

25 May 2006 Vladimir Putin denies that Russia considers China to be an alternative to Europe as a consumer of Russian energy resources.

The People's Republic of China is in no way an alternative to Europe as a consumer of our energy resources. China is one of the countries that is developing very fast. It is an enormous consumer of energy resources. We

produce these energy resources. And, of course, we shall look for partnership on the world's markets that will meet our economic interests.

25 May 2006 CIS Executive Committee Secretary Vladimir Rushaylo visits Tajikistan for talks with Tajik President Emomali Rahmonov. They discuss the agenda of the 25 May 2006 meeting of the Council of the Heads of Government of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

25 May 2006 Vladimir Putin appoints Vasiliy Nikolayevich Istratov the Russian ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to Azerbaijan.

The president of Nagorny Karabakh, Arkadiy Gukasyan, visits Moscow. He says Nagorny Karabakh has all grounds to expect recognition by the international community. "The recent referendum in Montenegro is a very important precedent. If the world community is ready to recognize Montenegro and Kosovo's independence, I think that it will be very difficult for them to explain why they do not recognize Nagorny Karabakh."

26 May 2006 The presidents of Russia and Tajikistan, Vladimir Putin and Emomali Rahmonov, have talks in Sochi. They agree a programme of cooperation in border control and a programme of aid to Tajikistan to develop its border control service.

26 May 2006 The head of the Duma's International Affairs Committee Konstantin Kosachev gives a news conference on Russian foreign policy. He comments on Iran's nuclear programme, relations with the EU and arms sales to Venezuela.

26 May 2006 Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Yakovenko says that the nuclear problems of Iran and the Korean peninsula cannot be resolved through unilateral measures, military force or sanctions.

26 May 2006 Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov has talks with his German counterpart, Franz Josef Jung. He says Russia will supply Iran with Tor-M1 short-range air defence systems.

Ivanov says antiterrorist exercises involving units of the Russian Airborne Assault Troops and the Bundeswehr will very soon be held on the territory of Russia. Plans for cooperation between the Russian and German defence departments in 2006 envisage 25 bilateral events. Ivanov says there are no international legal restrictions on the supply of state-of-the-art Russian weapons to Venezuela.

26 May 2006 Federation Council Defence and Security Committee Viktor Ozerov says that "an obvious threat to Russia stems from the fact that the USA and NATO have expanded their zone of interests into Central Asia and the South Caucasus and are now trying to strengthen this hold through interparliamentary cooperation mechanisms".

26 May 2006 Yuriy Shafranik, chairman of the Russian Committee for International Cooperation with Libya says:

We have a zone of strategic interests - Iraq and surrounding region, and North Africa - Algeria and Libya. The point is that both Algeria and Libya - we underestimate this, many of us in Russia underestimate this - are very significant, they are exceedingly significant players in Europe, on the market. And Europe's market directly affects Russian interests - the interests of Gazprom and the oil sector.

26 May 2006 The director of the Russian Foreign Ministry's security and disarmament department, Anatoliy Antonov says 61 nuclear submarines have been scrapped in Russia since 2002, of which 17 were scrapped with international assistance.

26 May 2006 Vladimir Nazarov, aide to the Russian Security Council secretary, says Russia's participation in sanctions against Iran to prevent the country from obtaining nuclear weapons cannot be ruled out.

27 May 2006 Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Titov visits Montenegro.

28 May 2006 Security Council Secretary Igor Ivanov has talks in Iran on the nuclear issue. He says: "unlike the USA, Russia believes that dialogue is the solution to the Iran nuclear problem. Any use of force will only complicate the problem and create tension in the region."

Sergey Lavrov and US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice discuss the Iran nuclear problem on the telephone.

29 May 2006 Sergey Lavrov addresses a mini session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) in Moscow. Lavrov says Iran could gain agreement to make peaceful use of nuclear energy if it meets IAEA requirements. He also says that democratic models cannot be imposed on countries from outside. He also says that Belarus and Hamas should not be isolated. He blames Moldova for blocking a settlement of the Transdnestr situation.

Vladimir Putin receives the president of the PACE, Rene van der Linden in Moscow.

Boris Gryzlov, the Duma speaker defends Belarus in a speech to PACE delegates in Moscow.

29 May 2006 Tekhsnabeksport's deputy director-general for marketing and information policy Valeriy Govorukhin says that nuclear fuel for the Iranian nuclear plant in Bushehr will be promptly delivered from Russia by air.

29 May 2006 The head of the Chinese parliament Wu Bangguo visits Moscow. He says Russo-Chinese trade turnover in 2005 was 29 billion dollars. Border trade accounts for 19 per cent of total trade.

30 May 2006 The heads of parliament of the SCO member-states meet in Moscow. Vladimir Putin addresses them.

30 May 2006 The MFA says that all responsibility for any escalation of tension in the event of the Georgian side repeating its actions in bringing armed units into the conflict zone in South Ossetia without authorization lies entirely with Tbilisi. The MFA says that "Georgian special units were brought into the Georgian-Ossetian conflict zone on 27 May."

30 May 2006 The MFA expresses concern about the riots in Kabul.

30 May 2006 Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has talks with his talks with Martti Ahtisaari, the UN secretary-general's special envoy for Kosovo. He says negotiations on the status of Kosovo should be conducted only with the interests of all sides taken into account.

30 May 2006 Lt-Gen Viktor Denisov says Russian military transport aircraft are to be used in the interests of NATO.

We received a proposal from the North Atlantic Alliance about a possible use of our aircraft in the interests of NATO. We have not cooperated in this domain before. So far, the current legislation stops us from performing such flights. A Defence Ministry commission has been working on this issue for several years, thoroughly examining all paragraphs of the agreement on the use of our transport aircraft in NATO's interests...several joint Russia-NATO exercises involving military transport aviation are to be held this year. One exercise will take place in July and another one in the autumn.

30 May 2006 The Russian ambassador to Ukraine Viktor Chernomyrdin believes that "there was never a worse time" than now for Ukrainian-Russian relations. He says that among the reasons are: "Ukraine's relations with NATO, Black Sea Fleet problems, Ukraine's "democratic quest", the development of the "Organization for Democracy and Economic Development - GUAM", and "Moldovan developments".

Duma Deputy speaker Vladimir Zhirinovskiy says Crimea should not belong to Ukraine.

30 May 2006 Sergey Lavrov says that Moscow will press for the agreement on relaxing the visa regime between Russia and the EU to come into effect as soon as possible. An agreement was signed at the Russia-EU summit in Sochi.

31 May 2006 CIS defence ministers meet in Baku. They discuss CFE, peacekeeping in Abkhazia. The meeting endorsed a plan of joint measures for operational training in 2007; questions connected with financing the unified CIS air defence system; the state of security of flights in commonwealth states.

Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov has said that Azerbaijani-Russian relations have recently entered a new stage. He says talks are the only way to resolve the Nagorny Karabakh conflict.

The Russian and Ukrainian defence ministers (Sergey Ivanov and Anatoliy Hrytsenko) have talks in Baku. Ukraine and Russia have discussed the possibility of launching Ukrainian long-range air defence S-200 and S-300 missiles at Russian firing grounds in the autumn.

31 May 2006 Deputy Security Council Secretary Yuriy Zubakov, visits Moldova for talks with Moldovan President Vladimir Voronin.

The MFA's ambassador for special assignments in charge of political settlement of the Dniester problem, Valeriy Nesterushkin, says the referendum on the independence of Moldova's separatist Transdnestr region will provide guidance for the leadership of the self-proclaimed republic in pursuing its policy.

Sergey Ivanov rejects an OSCE proposal to withdraw from Moldova.

31 May 2006 Sergey Lavrov visits Turkey. He says there is a chance that the situation with the Iranian nuclear programme will be settled at the talks in Vienna.

I hope that the situation around the Iranian nuclear programme is resolved through negotiations because no other solution exists and that

Iran, enjoying full rights, will join in with cooperation in that broad region which borders on the Black Sea and includes adjoining countries. We are convinced that cooperation in that (Black Sea) region should include Iran as a participant with full rights. We all need to seek such forms [of talks] that would be acceptable to all countries in the region.

It is essential that the Iranian leadership embarks on the road of full cooperation with the IAEA in accordance with the decisions that were taken by the IAEA board of directors and that were supported by the UN Security Council.

We are actively trying to promote the setting up of a direct dialogue between all interested countries and Iran and we believe attempts to artificially isolate Iran from its lawful right to take part in cooperation projects in that region to be counterproductive.

31 May 2006 Federal Industry Agency head Boris Aleshin meets Ergash Shoismatov, Uzbek deputy prime minister. They discuss economic relations. Both of them are co-chairmen of the interparliamentary commission on scientific-technical and economic cooperation.

June

1 June 2006 *Argumenty i Fakty* says Transdnestr is discussing the possibility of joining the CIS.

1 June 2006 The MFA urges Ethiopia and Eritrea to make more efforts towards peace settlement.

1 June 2006 Sergey Lavrov attends a meeting of the foreign ministers of the six (UN Security Council P5 plus Germany) in Vienna to discuss Iran.

The MFA welcomes USA's willingness for direct talks with Iran.

1 June 2006 Russia and China sign an agreement to monitor water in border areas.

1 June 2006 Turkish Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul asks Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov to support Turkey in its fight against terrorism. He asks that Russia take measures against illegal activities of the Kurdistan Workers Party on its territory.

1 June 2006 Sergey Lavrov urges South Ossetia and Georgia to stick to the proposals which have already been worked out and to implement them.

The MFA says South Ossetia's right to self-determination is a principle which is acknowledged in the world as territorial integrity. Moscow respects the principle of territorial integrity but so far this integrity, as applied to Georgia, is a possible condition rather than a political and legal reality.

Sergey Lavrov accuses Georgia of attempting to hinder the rotation of Russian peacekeeping forces in South Ossetia.

South Ossetian leader Eduard Kokoiti says South Ossetia is preparing to submit to the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation documents testifying that the republic has never ceased to be a constituent part of Russia.

Russia begins pulling out equipment from Batumi.

1 June 2006 Gazprom says that in 2007 Belarus must pay market prices for gas.

2 June 2006 Vladimir Putin denies Russia has any plans to incorporate any new outside territories into the Russian state.

Sergey Lavrov says Georgia "is considering using force to settle the problem of South Ossetia". He calls upon Georgia not to be afraid of a referendum in South Ossetia on the issue of self-determination.

2 June 2006 Vladimir Putin says that the G8 cannot replace the UN. He says Russia demands equal terms in economic cooperation with the international community.

Our friends in Europe are asking us to let them into our energy sector, the very heart of the Russian economy. Then you too should let us into the most important sectors of your economy.

Some obsolete COCOM lists are still being applied to Russia. The Cold War is long gone, and the Soviet Union is gone, but the restrictions are still in force...Russia too could have drawn up a whole list of claims.

2 June 2006 Sergey Lavrov says that all agreements of the group of six international mediators on Iran definitively preclude the use of military force against Tehran. He also announces that the Russian proposal on establishing a joint venture for uranium enrichment was included in the package of proposals prepared by the six for Iran. He says these proposals will be handed over to Iran soon.

2 June 2006 The MOD rejects media claims that Russia intends to start the construction of a naval base in the port of Tartus in Syria.

3 June 2006 Vladimir Putin makes the following statement on autonomy.

Russia has never raised the question of incorporating into the Russian state any territory outside of it. We do not have any plans like this. But all of us together should understand and reach a decision ourselves. Montenegro is an example, but it is not the only one. There is the problem of Kosovo, too. We should all understand this ourselves and decide what we regard as a priority when settling these questions. Is the protection of the territorial integrity of the states that exist today our priority, or is it those hard to determine and understand concepts of historical justice, along with political expedience?

I believe that we should all - and we can - develop common rules, norms and approaches to events of the same nature in different parts of the world. If we do not, there will be chaos. So when we hear that in a region of the world or in one part of Europe - very near, virtually next door to us by Russia's, by our, scale - an approach is possible but elsewhere it is absolutely inadmissible, both we ourselves find it difficult to understand

why that is so and we find it even more difficult to explain that to our citizens.

3 June 2006 A Russian embassy car in Iraq is attacked. An employee of the Russian diplomatic mission, Vitaliy Vitalyevich Titov, dies and four others are kidnapped.

3 June 2006 The rotation of Russian peacekeepers in South Ossetia is completed.

4 June 2006 Sergey Lavrov says Russia has no objection to direct US-Iranian talks. He says: "We were not striving for any primacy. If the problem is successfully settled in direct bilateral talks between Iran and the USA, no-one will probably feel very aggrieved by this."

The head of Rosatom, Sergey Kiriyyenko, says Iran has the right to develop peaceful nuclear energy on condition that there is a guarantee of non-proliferation.

4 June 2006 Sergey Lavrov says that the Black Sea states can ensure security on the Black Sea on their own through Blackseafor.

4 June 2006 Sergey Lavrov says that when selling weapons to foreign states, Russia observes all its international and legal obligations. He defends Russian arms sales to Venezuela.

4 June 2006 The rotation of the Russian peacekeeping contingent in the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict zone is completed.

4 June 2006 The National Interest discussion programme hosted by Dmitriy Kiselev discusses the Afghanistan situation. The commentators agree that the presence of US and NATO troops benefits Russia, as they prevent chaos and radical Islam spreading to Central Asia. The studio guests were Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Yakovenko, Moscow Region governor Boris Gromov, head of the Council on Foreign and Defence Policy think-tank Sergey Karaganov and Professor Vladimir Sazhin from the Academy of Sciences' Oriental Studies Institute.

5 June 2006 The MFA criticizes the NATO position on the CFE treaty.

5 June 2006 Gazprom warns that there may be a shortfall in the supply of gas to Europe this winter as at present Ukraine's Naftohaz is not pumping enough gas into its underground storage facilities.

5 June 2006 The MFA rejects Ukrainian proposals that the Russian-Ukrainian treaty on cooperation in the use of the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Straits of 24 December 2003 should be revised.

Andrey Kokoshin, head of the Duma's Committee on the Commonwealth of Independent States and Relations with Compatriots says Ukraine's growing contacts with NATO run counter to the public interest of Ukraine as well as Russia and the entire international community,

6 June 2006 The head of Gazprom, Aleksey Miller, at the World Gas Conference in Amsterdam, reassures European consumers by saying that Gazprom will honour its gas supply contracts.

Miller warns that Ukraine could suffer gas shortages in the coming winter unless it takes immediate action to pump more gas into underground reservoirs.

6 June 2006 At the eighth session of the intergovernmental Russian-Romanian commission for economic and scientific-and-technical cooperation held in Moscow, Russian Minister of Information Technologies and Communication Leonid Reyman and Romanian Minister of Economy and Commerce Ioan-Codrut Seres sign an agreement on cooperation in information communications, power engineering, industry and transport.

6 June 2006 First Deputy Prime Minister Dmitriy Medvedev says he believes that in the future Russia will remain, first and foremost, part of the European civilization.

It is obvious to me that the Russian state should profess to be mainly part of Europe. President Putin too spoke about it recently...It does not mean that we should forget about our ties with other regions, but historically we are above all a European country. Any future Russian leader should remember this...If we manage to keep this set of values, it will be of benefit to Russia, to Europe and the whole world.

6 June 2006 Minister of Finance Aleksey Kudrin says he will write off 700 million dollars which the poorest countries owe to Russia. Russia is not declining to make early payments to the Paris Club of creditors concerning the former Soviet Union's debt. The debt to the Paris Club amounts to 22 billion dollars.

6 June 2006 Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Sergey Ivanov categorically denies reports alleging that Russia's Black Sea Fleet may be redeployed from Sevastopol to Syria.

7 June 2006 Vladimir Putin meets in Moscow Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu.

7 June 2006 Sergey Lavrov attends the Duma's government hour. He says if Ukraine and Georgia join NATO, this will mean a colossal geopolitical shift.

The Duma issues a statement expressing an "extremely negative attitude" to Ukraine's plans to join NATO in appeal to the deputies of the Ukrainian Supreme Council.

7 June 2006 Sergey Lavrov expresses concern over the possibility of the US deploying missile defence elements in Eastern Europe. He says Russia would only support UN Security Council sanctions on Iran if Tehran were in breach of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

7 June 2006 FSB Director Nikolay Patrushev addresses the Duma. He says the policy of double standards pursued by some countries adversely affects the effectiveness of liaison and cooperation in the world community in the fight against international terrorism.

7 June 2006 The MFA calls for enhancing the Palestinian-Israeli dialogue.

8 June 2006 Talks between Japan and Russia take place over a proposal to have Japanese firms join Russian development of a Siberian oilfield in connection with a project to lay a Pacific coast-bound pipeline.

8 June 2006 CSTO Secretary-General Nikolay Bordyuzha says peacekeeping contingents of the CSTO under the aegis of the UN can be deployed to deal with conflicts in various regions of the world.

8 June 2006 The MOD is given the go-ahead for the launch of foreign satellites.

9 June 2006 Sergey Lavrov meets High Representative to Bosnia-Herzegovina Christian Schwartz-Schilling. Lavrov says the Bosnian settlement "is moving forward but not everything has been resolved and there are still problems".

9 June 2006 The MFA expresses concern over Israeli military strikes into Gaza.

Sergey Lavrov says he hopes that a referendum in Palestine will promote the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian state.

9 June 2006 The chairman of the Duma's international affairs committee, Konstantin Kosachev, visits China.

9 June 2006 Moroccan Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Mohamed Benaissa visits Moscow.

9 June 2006 The Ukrainian special services expel from the Crimea a correspondent of *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, Aleksandr Kots.

9 June 2006 Germany and Russia reach agreement on paying off 1.3 billion euros of Russia's debt. Germany and Russia will continue negotiations concerning the remaining debt exceeding 6.5 billion euros.

10 June 2006 The MFA denies statements by US representative at the UN John Bolton about alleged differences in the Russian leadership on Iran's nuclear policy.

11 June 2006 In accordance with a decree of the president of the Russian Federation, Russia recognizes the Republic of Montenegro as an independent and sovereign state.

12 June 2006 Abkhaz leader Sergey Bagapsh meets his Dniester region counterpart Igor Smirnov and South Ossetian leader Eduard Kokoiti in Sochi.

13 June 2006 The 10th International Economic Forum opens in St Petersburg. Vladimir Putin addresses the participants.

Vladimir Putin has talks with Finnish President Tarja Halonen in St.Petersburg.

13 June 2006 Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili arrives in St Petersburg for talks with Vladimir Putin.

Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov expresses concern over Georgia using force in South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

13 June 2006 The MFA calls on all the political forces of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) to stop feuding and return to the legal framework.

13 June 2006 The MFA says Russia is hoping that Tehran will make a balanced study of the six nations' proposals and consider them from the point of view of Iran's long-term interests. MFA spokesman Mikhail Kamynin is commenting on the outcome of the visit to Iran by the secretary-general of the council of the European

Union, Javier Solana, and the "package proposal" which he handed over. By agreement among the foreign ministers of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and Germany, Solana visited Tehran on 6 June accompanied by deputy foreign ministers from Britain, Germany, France and Russia.

13 June 2006 The Russian president's special envoy for SCO affairs, ambassador Vitaliy Vorob'yev, says that the SCO is not developing into a military-political bloc, an alternative to NATO.

14 June 2006 Vladimir Putin arrives in Shanghai for a SCO summit.

14 June 2006 Sergey Ivanov says that Russia will not agree a single contract with another state if there is any suggestion in the conditions of a threat to the international non-proliferation regime for missile technology.

He also says that civilian output will account for 70 per cent of the entire output of the Russian defence industry by 2015, and it already produces 30 per cent of the equipment for Russia's fuel and energy industry.

Sergey Ivanov says that there is no alternative to the presence of Russian peacekeepers in Abkhazia.

14 June 2006 Armenian Prime Minister Andranik Markaryan condemns the increasing radical-nationalistic policy in Russia.

14 June 2006 The Russian-Pakistani working group on the fight against terrorism meets in Moscow. It is chaired by the Russian president's special representative, Anatoliy Safonov, and Pakistan's deputy foreign minister, Athar Mahmood.

15 June 2006 Vladimir Putin calls for the creation of a SCO energy club.

Vladimir Putin has talks with the Iranian leader, Mahmud Ahmadinezhad at the SCO summit. He states:

We consider that all countries of the world, including Iran, are entitled to implement their plans in the sphere of high technology and to use this technology in their development. They need to do this in such a way as to totally exclude any and all proliferation concerns on the part of the international community.

Vladimir Putin says that Islam Karimov must be supported in Uzbekistan. He states:

The state structures in the independent states in the post-Soviet space are still weak and vulnerable. And one has to have a careful approach to them. This also applies to Uzbekistan. Bearing in mind that it has a border with Afghanistan, it is quite clear that it is easy to blow up the situation there...One has to give the country an opportunity to develop in a natural way and not to impose, as some states do, their own standards, even if they look attractive at the first glance.

15 June 2006 G8 interior ministers meet in St.Petersburg. They discuss fighting terrorism.

16 June 2006 ITAR-TASS claims that talks between Russia and the Paris Club "have achieved a resolution" to the issue of early payment of Russia's debt of 22 billion euros.

16 June 2006 Vladimir Putin has an informal meeting with Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev in Almaty. He also meets Azerbaijan President Il'ham Aliyev there.

Putin rejects accusations which allege that the SCO is essentially a new Warsaw Pact.

Vladimir Putin makes the following comment on the talks over the Iranian nuclear programme: "This is real a movement forward which was achieved thanks to efforts of all six countries that took part in tackling the issue, more precisely seven countries, including Iran itself."

16 June 2006 Sergey Lavrov says Russia has no objection to cooperation with the countries of the West and the USA in the energy sector within the scope of the SCO. Lavrov states that:

Iran has given a positive response to the proposal from the six nations to start talks. Iran is ready for such talks. In the very near future Iran will announce the timescale it is going to propose for holding such talks...I think this is a very constructive response. It is, of course, preliminary. Iran is still preparing its reaction, including with regard to the timescale. We will hope that this encouraging news will be given specific form in the very near future.

16 June 2006 Director of the FSB Nikolay Patrushev says the special services and law-enforcement agencies of over 50 countries will set up a joint database of terrorist organizations. He attends the fifth international conference of heads of security services and law-enforcement bodies in Kazan.

17 June 2006 Vladimir Putin meets Afghan leader Hamed Karzai in Kazakhstan. He also meets Israeli First Deputy Prime Minister Shimon Peres there.

17 June 2006 The Ministry of Finance says Russia has agreed with its Paris Club creditors a plan for early payment of its 22 billion dollar remaining debt.

17 June 2006 Gazprom president Aleksey Miller and Slovene Prime Minister Janez Jansa meet in Strunjan in Slovenia. He says Gazprom has reiterated its interest in a pipeline that would run across Slovenia to Italy.

17 June 2006 A major Russian-Belarusian command-post exercise, Shchit Soyuz-2006, begins in Belarus.

19 June 2006 The Russian embassy in Baghdad says it has no information about a group with Al-Qa'idah links having admitted responsibility for the kidnapping of its staff in Iraq. The Iraqi group of the Mujahedin of the Shura Council who claimed earlier they were the kidnappers gives Moscow 48 hours to withdraw all its troops from Chechnya and set free all Muslim prisoners.

19 June 2006 Former German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder speaks at the 10th annual investment conference in Moscow. He says Russia remains the most reliable energy supplier for Europe.

19 June 2006 In Moscow the navy commander-in-chief, Admiral Vladimir Masorin, and Indian Chief of Naval Staff Adm Arun Prakash discuss military cooperation and the arms trade.

20 June 2006 Deputy chairman of the Gazprom board, Aleksandr Medvedev, says that Gazprom's revenues from the export of Russian natural gas abroad will be over 37 billion US dollars. Revenues from gas exports were 26 billion dollars in 2005.

Gazprom says it will expand its gas transportation system in Uzbekistan, enabling it to carry up to 55 billion cu.m. a year.

Aleksandr Ryazanov, deputy chairman of the Gazprom board states:

In 2007, if everything goes to plan, the price will be around 180 dollars, which we see as close to the European price. If we talk about the problems that exist today as regards the CIS, our main task is undoubtedly to achieve normal payment for gas already supplied because, and I'd like to say this once again, the rise in prices is fairly difficult for many countries. It has to be said, however, that at the moment we have virtually no problems with payments, with the exception of Ukraine.

In our view, Ukraine is not working sufficiently effectively to ensure it has gas for the winter period or to put enough gas into underground storage. If they continue at this pace, Ukraine is certain to have very real problems in winter that are bound to have an impact on exports of Russian gas because the same old story of diverting gas without permission could start again.

20 June 2006 The head of the Federation Council International Affairs Committee Mikhail Margelov says that Russia does not intend to give in to the demands of terrorists.

Al-Qa'idah has officially announced that they have seized our citizens. Their demands are very clear. We have been given a 48-hour deadline. Both the demands are absurd. It is obviously foolish to use the language of ultimatums when talking to us. It is obvious that we will not give up our citizens.

It is also obvious that yesterday's statement by Al-Qa'idah absolutely clearly shows that international terrorist aggression against Russia is continuing. The worldwide terrorist international which is fighting against civilization is demanding that we return to them a part of our territory, which at one time they considered to be their own.

20 June 2006 Vladimir Putin has talks in Moscow with Italian prime minister Romano Prodi. He says he is certain that the Iranian nuclear dossier can still be returned from the UN Security Council to the IAEA.

In fact, the essence of the Iranian nuclear programme is already being considered by the UN Security Council, but our objective is to use the negotiation process involving the six nations and Iran in order to bring this process back into the IAEA framework.

20 June 2006 The MFA criticizes the report of the US human rights organization Freedom House dedicated to democracy in Russia.

20 June 2006 CSTO Secretary-General Nikolay Bordyuzha says NATO has not responded to the CSTO's proposal on developing cooperation. "A year and a half ago the CSTO offered to cooperate with NATO. We have yet to receive a clear answer. We are aware that it is not a technical problem, but we are not upset about it."

20 June 2006 First Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Denisov attends the 33rd session of the council of foreign ministers of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in Baku. He says the need for cooperation between Russia and the Islamic world is growing now that the international community encounters more frequent manifestations of inter-confessional misunderstanding and estrangement.

20 June 2006 CSTO secretary-general Nikolay Bordyuzha says the CSTO, "is concerned, among other things, over the restoration or creation of military infrastructure in NATO member states next to Russia and Belarus". "Intelligence centres and radar stations are being set up. You know about plans concerning the creation of ballistic missile defence elements in Eastern Europe, which runs counter to statements that these elements will be used against Iranian or North Korean missiles. I am a former missile officer and know a thing or two about this. This sounds ridiculous to me."

He expresses concern about the entry of Romania and Bulgaria into NATO and the possible accession of Ukraine.

21 June 2006 Members of the Federation Council criticize a decision by the USA to impose new sanctions against Belarusian leaders and believe this is a vestige of the "cold war".

The chairman of the Standing Commission for International Affairs and National Security in the Belarusian National Assembly's Council of the Republic, Mikalay Charhinets expresses concern over Gazprom's pricing policy.

21 June 2006 Turkmenistan proposes that Russia purchase gas at 100 dollars per 1,000 cu.m., that is 35 dollars more than the current price.

21 June 2006 The first deputy head of the Duma's CIS Affairs Committee, Akhmed Bilalov, says the Duma "is not expecting anything good" to come out of the plans for setting up an Orange coalition in the Ukrainian Supreme Council. Duma First Deputy Speaker Lyubov Sliska also expresses negative views on the creation of the orange coalition.

21 June 2006 The MFA calls for the release of Russian diplomats kidnapped in Iraq.

21 June 2006 The MFA expresses concern over Israeli air strikes in Gaza.

21 June 2006 Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has talks with OSCE Secretary-General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut.

21 June 2006 Vladimir Putin orders the signing of a protocol to the agreement between Russia and the USA on safe and reliable shipment, storage and destruction of weapons and on preventing the proliferation of weapons, which was signed on 17 June 1992.

21 June 2006 A three-day joint special exercise by Russian and Kazakh border guard troops, Caspian 2006, ends in the Caspian Sea.

22 June 2006 Defence Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Sergey Ivanov flies to Belarus to attend the meeting of CSTO defence ministers.

22 June 2006 The Yuliya Tymoshenko Bloc leader, MP Yuliya Tymoshenko, says that as prime minister she will insist on the revision of all accords related to gas supplies to Ukraine. The head of the Duma International Affairs Committee, Konstantin Kosachev, says a review of Russian-Ukrainian gas agreements would lead to "major convulsions" in relations between the two countries.

22 June 2006 A Russian delegation visits Transdnestr. Gazprom is increasing the price of gas for Moldova to 160 dollars per 1,000 cubic metres from the present 110 dollars. The price is going up from the third quarter of 2006.

22 June 2006 The MFA welcomes the meeting between the head of Palestine, Mahmud Abbas, and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert.

22 June 2006 In connection with reports about plans to launch a ballistic missile, Moscow has pointed out to Pak Ui-chun, the ambassador of the DPRK, North Korea, the inadvisability of actions that could have a negative impact on regional stability.

23 June 2006 Lukoil head Vagit Alekperov says that LUKoil company is looking into the opportunity of pumping oil through the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline.

23 June 2006 The Belarusian government and the management of Gazprom agree to draw up a list of Belarusian enterprises in which Gazprom would like to invest.

23 June 2006 The chairman of the Duma's committee on international affairs, Konstantin Kosachev, is interviewed. On Ukraine he says:

The outlook is very uncertain. We do not know what steps the new leadership of Ukraine will take. We have to begin with the fact that Ukraine is currently experiencing very obvious difficulties with its economic and social development. Of those 10 slogans or promises which the Orange coalition took with it into the revolution, only two have actually been kept. This is the reprivatization of Kryvorizhstal and the increase in child benefit. The other eight - connected with various aspects of Ukrainians' life - have not been kept. Not because somebody deceived somebody else, but simply because the Ukrainian budget simply cannot afford them. In fact, they are becoming even less affordable because the rate of economic growth has fallen exponentially, from 10-12 per cent under Yanukovich's government to the present level of 2-3 per cent. This is one of the lowest figures in Europe. Furthermore, there is no prospect of escaping this crisis. The continuing gas saga, the fact that Ukraine does not have enough money to pay its main suppliers in Russia and Turkmenistan, the fact that it is unable to pump reserves into gas reservoirs in readiness for winter, all show that Ukraine faces very serious economic - and I stress economic at the moment - economic upheaval as early as autumn this year.

Konstantin Kosachev says Polish President Lech Kaczynski's initiative to hold a summit on energy security without the participation of Russia is aimed at

"undermining the evolving all-European stability of energy supplies". Lech Kaczynski had proposed holding a summit to be attended by Poland, Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan.

24 June 2006 Deputy Foreign Minister Grigoriy Karasin says that if Kosovo becomes independent, this will be interpreted as a precedent by Abkhazia, South Ossetia and the Dniester region that are thinking of the same thing.

26 June 2006 Vladimir Putin signs a decree on aid to compatriots who live abroad and who decided to volunteer to resettle in the Russian Federation.

26 June 2006 Anatoliy Safonov, the Russian president's special envoy for international cooperation in the struggle against terrorism and transnational organized crime, says that Moscow fears that the drug transit from Afghanistan through Russia May 2006 become the main thoroughfare. He adds that of 4-5,000 tonnes of drugs from Afghanistan 15-20 per cent pass along the so-called northern route across Russia.

26 June 2006 It is reported that the four Russian diplomats abducted in Iraq have been killed by their captors.

26 June 2006 Gazprom head Aleksey Miller and the Iranian deputy minister of oil, Mohammad Hadi Nezhad-Hoseyniyan decide to consider the possibility of setting up a joint venture to develop oil and gas fields.,

Sergey Kiriyyenko says that the construction of the nuclear power station at Bushehr in Iran could be completed in 2007.

27 June 2006 Vladimir Putin makes a speech on Russian foreign policy at the MFA. This appears on the MFA website.

27 June 2006 Sergey Lavrov says:

Security in Iraq must be provided by both the government of the country which set up the relevant structures and by the coalition forces headed by the United States of America present there. I am convinced that this is the direct responsibility of the coalition forces. We have made several requests for measures to be taken to improve the security of our citizens in Iraq, our diplomats in Iraq, and we will continue our efforts to ensure this problem is resolved.

Anatoliy Safonov, the Russian president's special representative for international cooperation in the fight against terrorism and transnational organized crime, says that following the incident with Russian diplomats in Baghdad, protection for the diplomatic missions of the Russian Federation in the world's trouble spots will be stepped up.

27 June 2006 The MFA calls on Israel not to take harsh measures in Gaza and to try to find a political solution.

27 June 2006 The MOD drafts proposals for negotiations with the USA on strategic offensive arms control after 2009. The need for negotiations arises because the 15-year term of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START-1) expires in 2009.

28 June 2006 LUKoil has announced its intention to acquire significant assets in Europe. The company is mainly interested in oil refineries in the UK and the Netherlands.

28 June 2006 Armenian President Robert Kocharyan meets Russian Interior Minister Rashid Nurgaliyev, who arrives in Yerevan to attend a session of the board of the Armenia Police and the Russian Interior Ministry.

28 June 2006 The prime ministers of Belarus and Russia Syarhey Sidorski and Mikhail Fradkov discuss gas supplies.

28 June 2006 Vladimir Putin "orders the Russian special services to take all measures to track down and liquidate the criminals who carried out this evil deed (the murder of Russian diplomats in Iraq)".

The Duma approves a statement "In connection with the murder of Russian citizens in Iraq", in which responsibility for the death of the diplomats is laid on the powers occupying that country.

28 June 2006 US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice visits Moscow for talks with Vladimir Putin. The Iranian nuclear programme, the situation surrounding Iraq and the Middle East are expected to be discussed during the visit.

28 June 2006 Sergey Lavrov has talks with Japanese opposite number, Taro Aso, in Moscow.

28 June 2006 Polish foreign minister Anna Fotyga visits Moscow.

28 June 2006 A session of the Council of Ministers of the Russia-Belarus Union State takes place in Moscow. The heads of the governments, Mikhail Fradkov and Syarhey Sidorski, discuss gas prices.

28 June 2006 A Gazprom delegation visits Turkmenistan to discuss Turkmen natural gas supplies of 25 billion cu.m.to Russia in the second half of 2006 and 70 billion cu.m. in 2007.

28 June 2006 Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Grigoriy Karasin and Georgian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Merab Antadze hold a working meeting in Moscow.

28 June 2006 Sergey Lavrov states: "We should certainly make use of these strengthened and consolidated positions in our foreign policy, and we shall do that. We shall also bear in mind that the strengthening of Russia is not to everyone's liking, not everyone is comfortable with it, and competition will only increase and get tougher."

28 June 2006 Deputy head of the Russian presidential administration Vladislav Surkov rejects Western criticisms of Russia's lack of democracy.

28 June 2006 Sergey Lavrov says that joint action is needed to thwart Afghanistan drug flows.

29 June 2006 The Moldovan-Russian company Moldovagaz says it does not recognize the decision of Gazprom to transfer the right to demand Moldova's 1.2 billion-dollar gas debt to the Factoring-Finance company.

29 June 2006 Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov signs a decree approving agreements which were reached in Paris on 15-16 June and which concern the full repayment of the remainder of Russia's debt to the Paris Club of creditors to the amount of 22 billion dollars.

29 June 2006 The foreign ministers of the G8 countries demand that the Palestinians free a captured Israeli soldier. The G8 foreign ministers express concern over the Israeli detention of Hamas officials in Gaza. G8 foreign ministers also call on Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and President Mahmud Abbas not to take any unilateral action that will put the final status of the Palestinian territories in doubt.

The MFA calls on the Palestinians to release the kidnapped Israeli soldier immediately and on the Israelis to stop major military operations.

29 June 2006 Sergey Lavrov says the G8 foreign ministers are unanimous in demanding that the people responsible for the murder of the Russian diplomats in Iraq be found and punished.

29 June 2006 The G8 foreign ministers express disappointment about the absence of official reaction from Iran to the Vienna proposals of the 6. The G8 foreign ministers welcome direct talks between Belgrade and Pristina over Kosovo's final status.

29 June 2006 Aleksandr Panov will become ambassador to Georgia.

29 June 2006 Vladimir Putin meet the US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in Moscow to discuss G8 summit in St.Petersburg on 14 July.

Turkish President Ahmet Necdet Sezer visits Moscow for talks with Vladimir Putin.

29 June 2006 The MFA expresses surprise at the decision of PACE to stop the post-monitoring dialogue with Latvia.

30 June 2006 First Deputy Prime Minister Dmitriy Medvedev has been re-elected chairman of the Gazprom board of directors and Aleksey Miller has been re-elected chief executive. Miller states:

We can say for definite that the era of cheap fuel has come to an end. Most companies are solving the task of where to find gas. We and you are looking at the issue of when is the best time to extract gas.

The statements we are hearing from Kiev can lead to a new serious gas crisis. Ukraine today is a weak transit link for the delivery of Russian gas to Europe.

30 June 2006 The deputy chairman of the Gazprom board of directors, Aleksandr Ryazanov, says Gazprom intends to acquire the Iran-Armenia pipeline which is being built.

30 June 2006 The FSB offers a reward of 10m dollars for information about the killers of Russian embassy staff in Iraq.

30 June 2006 Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov denies a US media report alleging that Iranian missile troops are studying at Samara aerospace university.

30 June 2006 Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Kislyak says that Russia is waiting for a "serious" answer to the proposals made to Iran recently by the group of six international mediators.

According to mutual agreement with Iranian colleagues, these proposals are not to be made public for the time being and this is not because they are of some closed, super secret nature, but it is in order to give the possibility to our Iranian friends to study everything calmly and without any pressure, ask necessary questions and understand how and on what basis we are proposing to find a political solution to the problem...Proposals were passed on to Tehran. We are hoping for a serious answer, because the proposals are serious.

Sergey Kislyak says Russia reckons that a North Korean missile launch is unnecessary. "As for the likelihood that North Korea will launch a missile, in political terms our position is that we really do not need the launch of such a device now, given that we all, including, I hope, North Korea, have an interest in the continuation of the six-party process."

Sergey Kislyak says Russia and the USA have started negotiations through diplomatic channels on the treaties on Strategic Offensive Potentials and Strategic Offensive Arms.

Kislyak says Russia is dissatisfied with the way the 10 plus 10 disarmament programme adopted at the G8 summit in Canada in 2002 is being financed.

30 June 2006 Vladimir Putin discusses the situation surrounding the capture of a hostage by Palestinian fighters and Israel's offensive operation in the Gaza Strip with Israeli premier Ehud Olmert by telephone.

30 June 2006 Sergey Lavrov has talks with Italian foreign minister Massimo D'Alema in Moscow. They discuss Gazprom-ENI cooperation.