

Russian Foreign Policy: Chronology

January-March 2002

January

3 January 2002 Foreign Ministry (MFA) spokesman Aleksandr Yakovenko urges Israel to lift the ban on Palestinian leader Yasir Arafat's visit to Bethlehem to attend Orthodox Christmas celebrations.

5 January 2002 The head of the external relations department of the president of Tatarstan, Timur Akulov, and the Tatarstan Minister for Emergency Situations and Civil Defence Valer Vlasov, acting on behalf of Tatarstan President Mintimer Shaymiyev, visit Afghanistan. They deliver a humanitarian cargo to Kabul.

6 January 2002 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov visits China for an extraordinary session of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

6 January 2002 The fifth round of Sino-Russian consultations on anti-missile defence finishes in Beijing. It was attended by representatives from the foreign ministries of the two countries.

6 January 2002 Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov visits Slovenia on holiday. He has talks with the Slovene leadership.

6 January 2002 Special envoy of the MFA for the Middle East Andrey Vdovin arrives in Israel on a mediating mission. He will meet Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, a US representative and Palestinian leader Yasir Arafat.

7 January 2002 The MFA states it regrets that despite appropriate appeals to the Israeli leadership, especially from Russia, PLO leader Yasir Arafat was not allowed to leave Ramallah for the celebration of Orthodox Christmas in Bethlehem.

7 January 2002 The Russian and Chinese foreign ministers, Igor Ivanov and Tang Jiaxuan, meeting in China urge India and Pakistan "to continue diplomatic efforts with the aim of reaching a political solution to the crisis" in relations between the two countries.

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7 January 2002 Igor Ivanov repeats at the meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Beijing that Russian forces will not take part in the Afghan peacekeeping force and Russia will concentrate on giving humanitarian assistance.

8 January 2002 First Deputy Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Trubnikov and the UN secretary-general's special representative and head of the UN mission in Tajikistan Ivo Petrov have talks on the Tajikistan situation.

8 January 2002 MFA special envoy to the Middle East Vasily Sredin dies at the age of 53.

9 January 2002 Turkey asks for extradition documents for Movladi Udugov.

10 January 2002 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov visits Uzbekistan.

10 January 2002 The MFA's representative in the Middle East, Andrey Vdovin, visits Jordan.

11 January 2002 Duma chairman Gennady Seleznev visits Tajikistan. He says Russia should increase its presence in Central Asia, and criticises the US presence in the region.

12 January 2002 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov and his Indian counterpart, Jaswant Singh, have a telephone conversation to discuss Russo-Indian relations.

14 January 2002 *Vedomosti* reports that Russia is now the third biggest arms exporter after the USA and Britain. A study prepared last year by the Centre for the Analysis of Strategies and Technologies shows that the volume of deliveries of Russian arms last year was about 3.6bn dollars (and about 3.68bn dollars in 2000).

14 January 2002 Brazilian President Fernando Henrique Cardoso visits Russia.

14 January 2002 The Russian MFA criticises the Latvian authorities' persecution of anti-fascist veterans.

14 January 2002 Gen Anatoly Kvashnin, chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces, visits Turkey. He signs an agreement on military cooperation and military personnel training cooperation.

15 January 2002 Tadeusz Iwinski, head of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)

says there has been progress in the resolution of humanitarian issues on the territory of Chechnya.

15 January 2002 US-Russian talks on strategic arms reduction are held in Washington. The American delegation is headed by US Under Secretary of Defence Douglas Feith, the Russian delegation by First Deputy Chief of Staff of the Russian Armed Forces Col-Gen Yury Baluyevskiy.

15 January 2002 Director of the Russian Federal Border Guard Service Konstantin Totskiy says that the presence of US forces in Central Asia will become unnecessary after the counterterrorist operation is completed in Afghanistan.

15 January 2002 Head of the Duma International Affairs Committee Dmitry Rogozin says Russia should not take the road of confrontation with the United States because of the American decision to withdraw from the ABM Treaty. He says Russia should also assess Cold War treaties. He says he believes it important to get rid of excessive commitments related "to flank restrictions imposed by the CFE Treaty". "It is more important for us now to concentrate military potential in the southern, not western direction." He also advocates "revising, if not denouncing, individual provisions of START-1 that for instance ties our hands on heavy bombers". Rogozin also says Russia should not enter NATO. "We should be interested in developing relations with the West in the sphere of joint security, but we should not have joint defence." He says Russia and NATO should have alliance-like relations.

15 January 2002 President Vladimir Putin is interviewed in *Gazeta Wyborca*. He says he is willing to invite the Pope to Moscow "at any time".

15 January 2002 Lithuanian Foreign Minister Antanas Valionis visits Russia. Igor Ivanov says little progress has been made in Russia-EU talks on Kaliningrad.

15 January 2002 Vladimir Putin visits France.

15 January 2002 MFA special representative on the Cyprus issue Vladimir Prygin says he welcomes the resumption of the negotiating process between the leaders of the island's two communities, President Glafcos Clerides and Rauf Denktash.

16 January 2002 Vladimir Putin visits Poland. He says Russia is willing to have an international summit on Kaliningrad.

16 January 2002 The Duma passes a resolution condemning the decision of the USA to withdraw from the 1972 ABM treaty.

16 January 2002 Deputy Security Council secretary Oleg Chernov visits India.

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16 January 2002 Vyacheslav Trubnikov, first deputy minister of foreign affairs, meets Aziz Khan, deputy foreign minister of Pakistan, in Moscow. He calls on India and Pakistan to show restraint.

17 January 2002 The Russian government establishes a new mechanism to cover the export of dual-purpose technology to Iraq, which is subject to international supervision and control.

18 January 2002 The chief of the emergency ministry's operational group in Afghanistan, Maj-Gen Valery Vostrotnin, says Russia's humanitarian centre working in Kabul since November will be reorganized into a representative office.

18 January 2002 The MFA condemns the terrorist attack in the Israeli town of Hadera.

19 January 2002 The chief of staff of the Russian armed forces, Anatoly Kvashnin, says Russia and the USA are to work out a new agreement by next summer on radical cuts in strategic offensive weapons. He says he believes that the US military presence in Central Asia is temporary.

19 January 2002 Russian Ambassador to Ukraine Viktor Chernomyrdin is interviewed in *Zerkalo Nedeli*. He says Russia will transit electricity through Ukraine to other countries in 2002.

20 January 2002 First Deputy Chief of Staff Yury Baluyevskiy says the Russian MOD and the US Defence Department plan to set up three joint working groups to promote military cooperation.

20 January 2002 Lebanese Deputy Prime Minister Isam Faris arrives in Moscow for a private visit.

21 January 2002 Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ordzhonikidze meets US Secretary of State Colin Powell in Tokyo at the conference on Afghanistan.

21 January 2002 Dmitry Rogozin attends the PACE session on Chechnya at Strasbourg. Vladimir Kalamonov, special representative of the Russian president for protecting human and civil rights and freedoms in Chechnya, also attends. He says Russia-PACE relations over Chechnya are improving.

21 January 2002 Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Aleksandr Yakovenko says Russia "insistently urges the government of Israel and the leadership of Palestine to take effective and urgent measures to end the dangerous chain of violence".

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21 January 2002 Head of the Palestinian National Authority Yasir Arafat sends a message to the Russian leadership via the Russian mission in Palestine, asking Russia to intensify efforts for leading the Middle East situation out of the deadlock.

Lebanese Deputy Prime Minister Isam Faris says the formula of the Middle East peace talks must be changed to give bigger role to Russia and the European Union.

Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Saltanov confirms that Russia is ready to strengthen its relations with Lebanon.

21 January 2002 Russian and American experts open nonproliferation consultations. Russia's delegation is led by Mikhail Lysenko, director of the Foreign Ministry's security and disarmament department, and the American by John Wolf, undersecretary of state.

21 January 2002 Turkmen President Saparmurat Nyazov visits Russia. He has talks with Vladimir Putin over gas relations and the Caspian Sea.

21 January 2002 Vladimir Putin and Palestinian leader Yasir Arafat have a telephone conversation.

21 January 2002 Deputy parliamentary speaker Vladimir Zhirinovskiy calls for closer ties with Iran.

22 January 2002 The head of the Federal Border Guard Service, Konstantin Totskiy, says that US forces in Central Asia should leave once the Afghan operation is completed.

22 January 2002 The MFA's ambassador at large Nikolay Kartuzov says Russia sees no grounds for military strikes against Iraq.

22 January 2002 Bulgarian Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Economy Nikolay Vasilev visits Moscow.

22 January 2002 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov and US Secretary of State Colin Powell have a telephone conversation during which they discuss the situation in the Middle East and South Asia.

22 January 2002 Russia's Mid-East envoy Andrey Vdovin is interviewed in *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*.

22 January 2002 Russia's permanent representative at the UN in Geneva, Leonid Skotnikov, says the US decision to withdraw from the 1972 ABM treaty is a mistake.

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22 January 2002 Kyrgyz Foreign Minister Muratbek Imanaliyev visits Russia.

22 January 2002 The MFA summons the British ambassador to Russia, Roderic Lyne, in connection with the reception in the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office of Chechen envoy Akhmed Zakayev.

23 January 2002 Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz arrives in Moscow.

23 January 2002 Deputy Foreign Minister Viktor Kalyuzhnyy opens a working meeting in Moscow, attended by deputy ministers of the five Caspian countries: Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russian and Turkmenistan.

23 January 2002 First Deputy Energy Minister Gurani Avalishvili has talks with an Indian delegation from the Petroleum and Natural Gas Ministry.

23 January 2002 Sergey Kiriyenko, head of the government commission for destroying chemical weapons and presidential envoy in the Volga Federal District, hopes that Western countries will increase financial assistance for Russia's efforts to scrap war chemicals.

23 January 2002 First Deputy Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Trubnikov meets his Kazakh counterpart Nurtay Abykayev.

23 January 2002 Federal Border Guard Service Col-Gen Konstantin Totskiy visits Tajikistan. He says the contingent of the Russian Federal Border Guard Service will stay in Tajikistan "at least for the next 10-15 years".

23 January 2002 Igor Ivanov has talks with Portuguese counterpart Jaime Gama, the current OSCE chairman.

23 January 2002 CIS Military Cooperation HQ holds a command post exercise for the CIS Rapid reaction force.

24 January 2002 Force commander Maj-Gen Sergey Chernomordin says the Collective Rapid Reaction Force in Central Asia is ready for combat missions.

24 January 2002 MFA spokesman Aleksandr Yakovenko says Russia "has no grounds to mistrust repeated statements by American officials that the deployment of US military units in Central Asia will be temporary and transparent".

Duma chairman Gennady Seleznev says the USA cannot set up its military bases in Central Asia because it does not have a UN mandate for this.

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24 January 2002 Czech foreign minister Jan Kavan visits Moscow.

24 January 2002 The president of Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliyev, visits Moscow.

24 January 2002 Russian Federal Border Guard Service Director Konstantin Totstkiy visits Armenia. He discusses the financing of Russian border guard units serving on Armenian borders.

24 January 2002 The MFA criticises the US State Department for meeting with rebel "Chechen foreign minister" Ilyas Akhmadov.

24 January 2002 Yasir Arafat receives Russian Middle East envoy Andrey Vdovin at the presidential office in Ramallah.

25 January 2002 Russian Deputy Ambassador at the United Nations Andrey Granovskiy tells the Security Council that it may withdraw its peacekeepers from the zone of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict if Georgia continues to delay the decision on their mandate and if Georgian guerrillas attack the peacekeepers.

25 January 2002 Chechen separatist leader Aslan Maskhadov's envoy Akhmed Zakayev is received at the French Foreign Ministry and the National Education Ministry.

26 January 2002 Marshal Igor Sergeev, adviser to the Russian president on strategic stability says the USA plans to withdraw its troops from the Central Asian countries after the end of the anti-terrorism operation in Afghanistan. He says Russia and the USA should link strategic offensive armaments to defensive ones.

26 January 2002 Austrian Federal Chancellor Wolfgang Schuessel arrives in Moscow on a visit.

27 January The Russian radar station in Cuba at Lourdes officially closes down.

28 January 2002 Duma chairman Gennady Seleznev visits Qatar as part of his Middle East tour. He says he believes that the UN Security Council should take special control over the peace process in the Middle East.

28 January 2002 Duma International Affairs Committee chairman Dmitry Rogozin says Russia will strongly oppose any use of force against Iraq.

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28 January 2002 The MFA issues a statement criticising the US approach to arms control following a speech made by John Bolton, US Undersecretary of State in Geneva.

28 January 2002 Faruq al-Shar'a, Syrian deputy prime minister and foreign minister, receives Sergey Prikhodko.

29 January 2002 Russian Federation President Vladimir Putin has talks with Austrian Chancellor Wolfgang Schuessel in the Kremlin.

29 January 2002 Deputy Defence Minister Col-Gen Aleksey Moskovskiy says the Russian military leadership is not planning any kind of "symmetrical or asymmetrical measures" in the near future in response to the USA's withdrawal from the ABM Treaty of 1972.

29 January 2002 Deputy Foreign Minister Anatoly Safonov, who is leading the Russian delegation at the current meeting of the Russia-NATO Permanent Joint Council says the Russia-NATO cooperation fighting terrorism should become more comprehensive.

29 January 2002 The MFA calls on the Palestine National Authority to take effective measures to curb terrorist attacks.

29 January 2002 Duma Chairman Gennady Seleznev visits Lebanon.

29 January 2002 International cooperation chiefs from the defence ministries of Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan meet in Beijing.

29 January 2002 Russian gas exports to Europe in 2001 are as follows:

Gas supplies to Western Europe amounted to 86.62 bcm [billion cubic metres] (90.4 bcm in 2000), including: to Germany - 32.61 bcm (34.1 bcm 2000), Italy - 20.2 bcm (21.8 bcm), France - 11.15 bcm (12.9 bcm), Turkey - 11.12 bcm (10.2 bcm), Finland - 4.46 bcm (4.3 bcm), Austria - 4.91 bcm (5.1 bcm), Greece - 1.52 bcm (1.6 bcm) and Switzerland - 340 mcm [million cubic metres] (400 mcm).

Russia exported a total of 40.34 bcm of gas to Eastern Europe in 2001 (39.9 bcm in 2000), including to Poland - 7.51 bcm (6.8 bcm), Slovakia - 7.52 bcm (7.9 bcm), the Czech Republic - 7.46 bcm (7.5 bcm), Hungary - 8.03 bcm (7.8 bcm), Romania - 2.87 bcm (3.2 bcm), Bulgaria - 3.329 bcm (3.2 bcm), Yugoslavia - 1.65 bcm (1.2 bcm), Croatia - 1.17 bcm (1.2 bcm), Slovenia - 570 mcm (700 mcm), Bosnia - 150 mcm (300 mcm) and Macedonia - 90 mcm (70 mcm).

29 January 2002 Moroccan Foreign Minister Mohamed Benaissa visits Moscow.

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29 January 2002 At a joint collegium held in Moscow the foreign ministers of Russia and Belarus sign a programme for the two states' joint actions in the foreign political arena.

29 January 2002 A two-day joint meeting of heads of CIS law-enforcement agencies starts in Minsk.

30 January 2002 The 43rd meeting of the Council of CIS Border Troops Commanders takes place at the CIS Executive Committee's office in Minsk.

30 January 2002 Deputy Foreign Minister Georgy Mamedov and the US delegation led by Under Secretary of State John Bolton meet in Washington to prepare documents on arms control for Bush's visit to Russia in spring.

30 January 2002 Russian presidential envoy and the head of the Commission on Chemical Disarmament, Sergey Kiriyyenko, says Russia and the USA are tightening the nonproliferation regime for chemical weapons and will take maximum efforts to dismantle and recycle them.

30 January 2002 Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz arrives in Moscow from Beijing.

30 January 2002 The MFA says Russia will be promoting the settlement of outstanding problems of the Middle East process regarding Lebanon.

31 January 2002 Prime minister Mikhail Kasyanov visits the USA.

31 January 2002 Bulgarian foreign minister Solomon Pasi visits Moscow.

31 January 2002 Deputy Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Trubnikov, the Kremlin's chief negotiator on Transdnestr, says in Tiraspol that Russia is not planning to withdraw all of its troops deployed in the region.

February

1 February 2002 Foreign minister Igor Ivanov says the global antiterrorist operation "cannot and must not be equated with a struggle against individual states, peoples and religions". He is commenting on Western speculation about the possibility of expanding the antiterrorist operation to areas beyond Afghanistan. Ivanov is visiting Japan where he discusses the planned peace treaty with Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi.

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2 February 2002 Andrey Illarionov says the size of Russia's energy exports is changing the traditional view of the world energy market, which has grown up since the end of World War 2 and the role which Russia itself is playing in it. He says the world "has suddenly realized that Russia is becoming not only the second largest oil supplier in the world after Saudi Arabia, but also, if one takes into account its gas exports, the world's leading exporter of energy resources". He is attending the World Economic Forum in New York.

2 February 2002 Sergey Ivanov attends the international conference on security issues in Munich. He heads the Russian delegation. He criticises NATO widening and its status as a military alliance. He says Russia does not share the US view that Iraq, Iran and North Korea support terrorism.

2 February 2002 Prime minister Mikhail Kasyanov says that the US Administration may give Russia market economy status in several months.

2 February 2002 Gazprom boss Aleksey Miller and Algerian Minister of Energy and Mines Chakib Khelil meet in Algiers. They say it is expedient to hold a conference of gas producers, consumers, EU regulating institutions and leading international fiscal bodies in 2002.

2 February 2002 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov denies claims that Moscow and Tokyo will have separate talks on the Kurile Islands.

3 February 2002 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says Russia will not endlessly tolerate the situation in Georgia's Pankisi Gorge.

3 February 2002 Igor Ivanov visits India.

3 February 2002 Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov says Russia may supply oil to the USA. He says Russia will be reviewing her oil strategy in the near future.

3 February 2002 Deputy foreign minister Aleksandr Losyukov says that real trade turnover between Russia and China amounted in 2001 to 20bn dollars.

4 February 2002 Israeli deputy prime minister Nathan Sharansky visits Russia. He says Russia should review its policy towards Iran.

4 February 2002 Iraqi Vice-President Taha Yasin Ramadan criticizes attempts by Russia's Foreign Ministry to persuade Iraq to receive international weapons inspectors.

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4 February 2002 A Federation Council delegation visits Iraq. It is headed by Ramazan Abdulatipov, the chairman of the Russian-Arab interparliamentary Union.

4 February 2002 Defence minister Sergey Ivanov says he is concerned about the possible creation of an independent state in Kosovo. He says Russian forces will remain in control over the eastern sector and Pristina.

4 February 2002 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov visits Afghanistan.

Defence minister Sergey Ivanov says in Rome that Moscow is planning to set up a humanitarian centre and a centre for mine clearing in Kabul.

The Duma committee on international affairs says it will scrutinize the agreements on providing aerodromes for US transport planes in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan as part of the international antiterrorist operation. Committee chairman Dmitry Rogozin fears these agreements may become an "unprecedented basis for a long-term presence of US servicemen in Central Asia". Rogozin is concerned about the possible spreading by the USA of the anti-terrorist operation.

4 February 2002 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov briefly visits Uzbekistan.

5 February 2002 Vladimir Putin and US President George Bush have a telephone conversation.

5 February 2002 Vladimir Putin and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon talk by telephone. Putin urges talks between Israel and the Palestinians.

The Russian-Israeli business centre and an office of the Israel-Russia-CIS Trade and Industry Chamber begins operating. In 2001 Russian-Israeli trade was worth 649.44m dollars. Chamber General Director Eli Ragimov told a news conference that Russian-Israeli trade increased 16% in 2001.

5 February 2002 Armenian President Robert Kocharyan has a telephone conversation with Vladimir Putin.

5 February 2002 Gazprom denies press reports that it has decided to give up the project for the construction of a gas pipeline through Poland. A decision on the Polish pipeline is expected later in February.

5 February 2002 Dmitry Rogozin, chairman of the Duma international affairs committee, is interviewed on Russian TV. He says Russian influence in Europe is on the increase. "Firstly, we noticed recently how many European leaders turned to Russian President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin with a request of sorts, a proposal on becoming a defender of European interests in the face of the USA, which means that Russia is gradually turning into an advocate of the European world before this superpower, the USA. This is very interesting because it creates a very interesting

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game for us in Europe. We are becoming a leading European power, and we are respected in this role of ours."

He says if the US takes military action against Iraq, Iran or North Korea: "However, if there is no proof and if decisions which run counter to the UN Security Council and the opinion of the USA's European partners in NATO, including such leading countries as Germany, Great Britain and France are taken, Russia's political points will sharply increase and Russia will become not just a mediator but a co-organizer of a new world order."

6 February 2002 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov assesses positively US Secretary of State Colin Powell's statement on readiness to draw up a legally-binding treaty with Moscow on strategic offensive weapons.

6 February 2002 Director of the Russian Border Guard Service Konstantin Totskiy says, "If the United States and other countries intend to stay here [ie in Central Asia] for good, we cannot agree to that."

6 February 2002 Leonid Ivashov, vice-president of the academy for geopolitical problems, says the shift in Russian foreign policy since 11 September 2001 amounts to geopolitical suicide.

7 February 2002 Deputy prime minister Ilya Klebanov visits India as a co-chairman of a plenary sitting of the Russian and Indian intergovernmental cooperation commissions.

8 February 2002 Spanish Crown Prince Felipe visits Moscow.

8 February 2002 President Vladimir Putin meets the leader of Germany's largest opposition party, the Christian Democratic Union, Angela Merkel.

8 February 2002 Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze's envoy and Ajarian leader Aslan Abashidze visits Moscow.

8 February 2002 Presidential aide Sergey Yastrzhembskiy says the West has taken a more balanced stand on Chechnya since 11 September 2001. He says both the USA and Britain recognise that the problem of Chechnya cannot be seen outside the context of the fight against international terrorism.

8 February 2002 The MFA states that it has had talks with the USA on Iraq in Geneva.

8 February 2002 Presidential aide on strategic stability Igor Sergeyev is interviewed in *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye* on Russia-NATO and Russia-US relations and arms control.

8 February 2002 India and Russia sign four key defence protocols in New Dehli. Both countries also decide to develop satellite global surveillance system and a fifth generation strike aircraft. The protocols, which include one on military-to-military cooperation, was signed in the presence of Defence Minister George Fernandes and Russian Deputy Premier Ilya Klebanov.

8 February 2002 The governor of the Kaliningrad District, Vladimir Yegorov, acknowledges Poland's and Lithuania's plans to introduce visas at the border with the Russian Kaliningrad Region "as a first step to change the district into Europe's reservation". He criticises this move.

9 February 2002 Deputy Foreign Minister Georgy Mamedov has strategic stability consultations in London.

9 February 2002 Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Aleksey Kudrin takes part in a meeting of G7 finance ministers and central bank heads in Ottawa. He calls on the G7 to work out common clearer criteria for suspending suspicious accounts prior to decisions by judicial authorities.

10 February 2002 Defence Minister and Deputy Chairman of the Afghan Interim Government Mohammad Fahim arrives in Moscow.

10 February 2002 Konstantin Pulikovskiy, plenipotentiary representative of the president of the Russian Federation to the Far East Federal District, visits North Korea for talks on regional cooperation.

10 February 2002 Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Saltanov visits Kuwait. A joint statement calls for Iraq's compliance with UN resolutions on the elimination of Iraqi weaponry of mass destruction and the return of Kuwaiti POWs and property. He delivers a message from Putin.

11 February 2002 The MFA expresses "deep concern about the new escalation of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict" following Israeli strikes against Palestinian targets. The MFA urges adoption of the Tenet-Mitchell plan. The MFA says that Russia, the US, the EU and the UN will continue to "energetically promote the normalization of the situation and the resolution of the Middle East conflict".

11 February 2002 Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ordzhonikidze visits Syria. He delivers a message from Putin.

11 February 2002 Defence minister Sergey Ivanov says that strikes can only be launched on countries which support terrorism if there is irrefutable evidence and UNSC authorisation.

11 February 2002 Kyrgyz President Askar Akayev visits Moscow.

11 February 2002 Deputy Duma Speaker Vladimir Lukin says Russia is concerned about the possibility of Turkish military bases being stationed in Azerbaijan. Lukin is commenting on recent statements made by Azeri Parliament Speaker Murtuz Alasgarov, who said that Azerbaijan was ready to station Turkish bases on its territory and in the future enable Ankara to use information from the Gabala radar station.

11 February 2002 A Duma delegation headed by Dmitry Rogozin visits Bulgaria.

12 February 2002 Sergey Ivanov urges Georgia to take effective measures to fight terrorists in the Pankisi gorge.

12 February 2002 The MFA criticises the Vatican for setting up Catholic dioceses in Russia without consulting with the Russian Orthodox Church.

The patriarch of Moscow and All-Russia, Aleksey II, and the members of the Holy Synod describe the decision by the pope to establish Catholic dioceses in Russia as an "unfriendly move which undermines prospects for improved relations between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Vatican". Talgat Tadzhuiddin, the chief mufti of the European part of the CIS says that the institution of Roman Catholic dioceses in Russia "seems very much like a deliberate provocation" and an instance of "coercive spiritual expansion".

12 February 2002 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says Russia might provide aircraft to Afghanistan. He says Russia "does not rule out supplying cargo aircraft, training planes and transport helicopters to Afghanistan, should it express that wish". He says that Russia sees the presence of military bases of the USA and other participants of antiterrorist operations in the Central Asia as a positive factor. He says terrorist networks still exist in Afghanistan; Russia assumes that "American bases are located in Central Asia on a temporary basis and only until the end of the antiterrorist operation ... I would not raise any unwarranted concern as yet regarding the deployment of American bases in this region ... overall we have a positive attitude towards the presence of the American military there."

13 February 2002 The MFA expresses concern that the anti-terrorist coalition may break up.

13 February 2002 The Russian Orthodox Church officially informs the Vatican that it did not wish Cardinal Walter Casper's visit to Moscow in the second half of February to go ahead as planned.

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13 February 2002 Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Saltanov visits Saudi Arabia.

13 February 2002 Hungarian counterpart Janos Martonyi visits Moscow.

13 February 2002 Minister of economic development and trade German Gref says it is disadvantageous for Russia to delay joining the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

13 February 2002 Russia's ambassador to Iran, Aleksandr Maryasov, says US claims that Iran supports terrorism are groundless.

13 February 2002 The head of the Palestinian Authority Yasir Arafat and Russian Middle East special envoy Andrey Vdovin meet in Ramallah to discuss the situation in the Palestinian territories.

13 February 2002 Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma visits Russia. He says Russia and Ukraine should cooperate on the way to EU integration.

14 February 2002 Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien visits Moscow.

14 February 2002 Igor Ivanov advises against any US use of force against Iraq.

14 February 2002 Russo-US consultations on the Balkans are held in Washington.

14 February 2002 The Russian and Moldovan presidents, Vladimir Putin and Vladimir Voronin, discuss the Russo-Moldovan relationship over the telephone.

14 February 2002 A member of the Federation Council, Col-Gen Valery Manilov, says any decision to expand the antiterrorist operation should be made by the UN Security Council, not by separate states.

15 February 2002 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov says he does not rule out that international terrorist Usamah bin Laden may be hiding in Georgia's Pankisi gorge.

15 February 2002 Vladimir Putin says the fight against international terrorism must proceed under the aegis of the UN.

15 February 2002 Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov says Russia opposes military action against Iraq.

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15 February 2002 Deputy prime minister Valentina Matviyenko says all Russia's ministries will soon be setting up working groups which will include representatives of human-rights agencies and other non-governmental organizations.

15 February 2002 The Russian and French MFAs issue a joint statement calling on Israel and Palestine to take urgent measures to stop the violence and resume negotiations. Igor Ivanov is visiting France.

15 February 2002 The Duma calls on the MFA not to grant entry visas to representatives of the Vatican.

15 February 2002 The MFA says it favours the recent statement made by Gen Nakatani, Director-General of the Japanese Defence Agency, calling for the setting up of a security structure in Asia involving Japan, Russia, the United States, South Korea and North Korea.

15 February 2002 Chairman of the Duma International Affairs Committee Dmitry Rogozin visits Iran.

15 February 2002 The International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights issues a declaration against "spy mania" in Russia. The campaign is set off by spying charges against military journalist Grigory Pasko, scientist Igor Sutyagin and former diplomat Valentin Moiseyev.

15 February 2002 Deputy Prime Minister Viktor Khristenko says that Russia is deeply concerned over the issue of sustaining the core supply systems of Kaliningrad Region in connection with EU enlargement.

15 February 2002 India and Russia have a joint session on Afghanistan chaired by Indian Foreign Secretary Chokila Iyer and First Deputy Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Trubnikov in Moscow. They both express concern about Pakistani influence in India.

17 February 2002 MFA Middle East representative Andrey Vdovin says there is no military way of settling the conflict in the Middle East. Palestinians and Israelis have to return to dialogue. He has just visited Jordan.

18 February 2002 Vladimir Kozin, senior adviser at the Foreign Ministry's second European department, says Russia may eventually join the European Union's rapid deployment force. He says: "We have been told that the European Union does not intend to set up an army and that the rapid deployment force will respond only to sudden crises and carry out peacekeeping operations in areas where NATO will not go. Why should Russia not join these forces?"

18 February 2002 A US Congress delegation visits Moscow to thank Vladimir Putin and the people of Russia for the understanding and assistance that they gave to the USA after the 11 September terrorist attacks on New York and Washington. The delegation is headed by James Saxton. Security Council secretary Vladimir Rushaylo meets the delegation and says prerequisites are now forming for Russian-US relations to move to a qualitatively new level. Rushaylo says the antiterror campaign must not be identified with the solution of geopolitical tasks.

18 February 2002 Security Council Deputy Secretary Oleg Chernov has a meeting in Moscow with US Under Secretary of State John Bolton to discuss strategic stability.

18 February 2002 Viktor Kozlov, director-general of Atomstroyeksport says Russia and Iran are considering building a new nuclear power unit in Iran.

18 February 2002 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says it is essential to carry out an antiterrorist operation in Georgia's Pankisi gorge "to squeeze" bandits out of the region.

18 February 2002 Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Saltanov meets Bahraini Prime Minister Shaykh Salman Bin-Hamad Al Khalifah to discuss the fight against terrorism, the situation in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf, international and regional issues.

19 February 2002 Foreign minister Igor Ivanov says the Pankisi gorge in Georgia "has turned into a lair of bandits and terrorists ... today's objective is to eradicate this source of terrorism, which is posing a threat to Georgia in the first place." He says Russia is ready to help Georgia do this.

19 February 2002 Foreign minister Igor Ivanov says Moscow and Washington have different approaches to working out an agreement on the radical reduction of strategic offensive weapons.

USA Under Secretary of State John Bolton says there are no plans for a new ABM treaty with Russia.

19 February 2002 Russian Middle East envoy Andrey Vdovin visits Egypt.

19 February 2002 The Russo-Kazakh bilateral commission meets in Moscow. Deputy prime minister Viktor Khristenko says Russia and Kazakhstan will draft long-term agreements for relations in the fuel and energy sphere.

20 February 2002 At the US-Russian strategic stability talks between Igor Ivanov and US Undersecretary of State John Bolton Russia and the USA confirm their intention of cutting their nuclear arsenals to 1,700-2,200 warheads on each side.

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20 February 2002 A four-party meeting of the Security Council secretaries of Russia, Poland, Ukraine and Belarus takes place in Kharkov.

20 February 2002 Deputy Foreign Minister Georgy Mamedov and US Deputy Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs Steven Pifer discussed prospects for interaction between Russia and the United States in the energy industry.

20 February 2002 The chairman of the Duma defence committee, Gen Andrey Nikolayev, says Moscow should not be directly involved in special operations against the Chechen militants in the Pankisi gorge in Georgia.

21 February 2002 The MFA issues a statement saying Russia stands for settling the situation in and around Iraq solely by political and diplomatic means. This follows the tour by Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Saltanov during his 8-19 February tour of countries of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain).

21 February 2002 Romanian prime minister Adrian Nastase visits Moscow.

21 February 2002 Federal Security Service director Nikolay Patrushev visits Georgia.

21 February 2002 Duma chairman Gennady Seleznev says the OSCE should not pressurise Belarus.

21 February 2002 CGS Anatoly Kvashnin says the headquarters of the group of Russian troops in the Transcaucasus will not be withdrawn from Tbilisi.

21 February 2002 Moldovan Prime Minister Vasile Tarlev meets the chairman of the Russian company United Energy Systems, Anatoly Chubays, in Moldova. The two sides discuss imports of Russian electricity to and via Moldova. Tarlev offers Moldovan power transmission networks for the transit of Russian electricity to Western Europe.

21 February 2002 Romanian Prime Minister Adrian Nastase visits Moscow for talks on economic cooperation.

21 February 2002 Mikhail Kasyanov says that the management of the state debt of Russia has improved over the past few years. In 1990 the state debt had been equal to 130% of Russia's GDP, while by today it had been reduced by 50%. Russia's foreign debt amounted to 157.4bn dollars on 1 January 2001. It was reduced to 137bn dollars by 1 June 2001.

Goskomstat states Russia had a visible foreign trade surplus of 49,652m dollars in 2001, down from 60,703m dollars in 2000. The visible foreign trade turnover grew 4.0% to 156,432m dollars last year from 150,427m dollars in 2000. Exports fell 2.4% to 103,042m dollars, while imports were up 19% to 53,390m dollars from, respectively, 105,565m dollars and 44,862m dollars in 2000. Exports to fellow members of the CIS rose 7.5% to 15,305m dollars, while exports to the rest of the world fell 3.9% to 87,737m dollars. Imports were down 2.3% and up 28.1% to the CIS and the rest of the world, respectively, to 13,117m dollars and 40,273m dollars.

22 February 2002 The president of the People's Republic of China, Jiang Zemin, telephones Vladimir Putin to brief him about the main results of US President George Bush's visit to China

22 February 2002 Russian and US experts agree on developing an informal mechanism for monitoring the export of dual-purpose weapons and technologies. It will be based on the 1994 Russian-US bilateral memorandum on cooperation in export control.

22 February 2002 Foreign minister Igor Ivanov says the international community must not relax its attention to the situation in the Balkans. He has talks with Serbian Deputy Prime Minister Nebojsa Covic.

22 February 2002 Russian Deputy Foreign Minister and special presidential representative on the regulation of the Caspian status Victor Kalyuzhnyy expresses disapproval of Iranian announcements of plans to carry out geological exploration work in the sector of the Caspian that it considers to be Iranian.

22 February 2002 The fourth meeting of the central bank heads of the Eurasian Economic Community takes place in Minsk. Representatives of central banks from Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan attend. They discuss the idea of a common CIS central bank.

22 February 2002 CIS experts and national plenipotentiary representatives meeting at the CIS Executive Committee's Minsk office finalize draft regulations on organizing and conducting joint antiterrorist actions in CIS member states.

23 February 2002 Vladimir Putin signs a decree relieving Aleksandr Avdeyev of his post as first deputy foreign minister. The president also signs a decree appointing Valery Loshchinin to the post of state secretary and first deputy foreign minister.

24 February 2002 Interfax reports a claim from a representative of a Chechen law enforcement agency that the Muslim Brotherhood and Al-Qa'idah are trying to set up bases in Georgia and Azerbaijan.

25 February 2002 A delegation of the Palestinian-Israeli Coalition for Peace arrives in Moscow at the invitation of the MFA.

25 February 2002 Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski meets in Warsaw a Duma delegation led by Dmitry Rogozin. They discuss economic cooperation and Kaliningrad.

26 February 2002 Igor Ivanov opens a conference in Moscow on the Caspian Sea status. Viktor Kalyuzhnyy outlines the Russian position. He says Russia is convinced that the Caspian Sea already has a legal status, which was determined by international agreements between the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic and Persia in 1921 and the treaty on commerce and marine navigation between the USSR and Iran in 1940. He says these documents should be adhered to by both Russia and Iran and the new Caspian states. He says in Russia's view, "the 'common water' principle has completely justified itself, and it should be preserved in working out a new legal status for the Caspian". He says Moscow "will not object if the jurisdiction of the Caspian states in coastal waters is expanded".

26 February 2002 The Palestinian-Israeli Coalition for Peace presents a peace plan in Moscow. The coalition is promoting a peace plan that calls for a return to the 1967 situation and the setting up of a Palestinian state coexisting with Israel within the 1967 borders. Under the plan, Palestine would take up the Arab part of Jerusalem and Israel the Jewish part. All Jewish settlements outside the 1967 borders would be dismantled, the refugee problem resolved and reparations and compensation issues tackled.

Foreign minister Igor Ivanov says Russia could put forward its own initiative on a Middle East peace settlement. Ivanov confirms Russia's commitment to a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East on the basis of the Madrid agreements, UN Security Council resolutions No 242 and 338, and other existing agreements and accords. Ivanov says he welcomes the Saudi peace proposals.

26 February 2002 Sergey Lavrov, Russia's representative at the United Nations Organization, expresses concern over "the obvious inability of Kosovo residents to take upon themselves the management of the Kosovo region". He says there is a vacuum in Kosovo.

26 February 2002 Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Aleksey Kudrin says that in its policy of reducing oil production, Russia will be very cautious and will base its actions on world trends.

26 February 2002 The heads of government of the Eurasian Economic Community countries (Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan) takes place in Moscow.

26 February 2002 The Ministry of Economic Development and Trade says Russian exports dropped 19.3% to 6.7bn dollars, while imports went up 3.1% to 3.3bn

dollars in January 2002. The exports were 8.3bn dollars and the imports were 3.2bn dollars in January 2001. Russian exports to countries outside the former Soviet Union reduced by 22.2% to 5.6bn dollars in January. The supplies to CIS republics did not change as compared to January 2001 - 1.1bn dollars. Yet Russian imports from countries outside the former Soviet Union went up by 9.1% to 2.4bn dollars, while imports from CIS republics declined by 10% to 0.9bn dollars.

27 February 2002 A regular meeting of the CIS Council of Defence Ministers opens in St Petersburg. 14 items, such as military and technological cooperation, information work, personnel issues and the creation of a united anti-aircraft system, are included in the meeting's agenda. Sergey Ivanov says other CIS troops may join in the peacekeeping operation in Abkhazia. He says negotiations are currently being conducted with NATO on the structure of the "20" format in which Russia may become a fully fledged member.

27 February 2002 Russian Foreign Ministry, Energy Ministry and Natural Resources Ministry officials discuss at a conference chaired by Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov issues concerning the drawing of a modified median line in the Caspian Sea between Russia and Kazakhstan.

27 February 2002 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov says he appreciates Saudi proposals on resuming the Arab-Israeli peace process in a telephone talk with his Saudi counterpart, Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal Bin-Abd-al-Aziz Al Sa'ud.

The foreign minister's representative for a Middle East settlement Andrey Vdovin points out the "great importance of efforts by international mediators aimed at finding a way out of the extremely difficult situation when every day witnesses deaths of people and bloodshed". He says: "We actively work in this direction with the Palestinian and Israeli sides, exercising close coordination with representatives of the United States, the European Union and the United Nations, as well as with Egypt and Jordan."

27 February 2002 The Russian Orthodox Church criticises the Pope's TV link up with Moscow.

27 February 2002 The Russian Emergencies Ministry signs a contract with the UN World Food Programme on supplying another 6,000 tonnes of food from the Kyrgyz city of Osh to Fayzabad in Afghanistan.

27 February 2002 The Ministry of Atomic Energy and the US Enrichment Corporation reach agreement on further delivery to the USA of Russian uranium obtained from dismantled nuclear weapons.

28 February 2002 An informal CIS heads of state summit takes place in Almaty. At the summit Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and the Kyrgyz Republic discuss setting up the Central Asian Cooperation organization. The meeting, which was

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held at President Nazarbayev's initiative, issued a statement on cooperation in the energy policy sphere.

28 February 2002 Foreign minister Igor Ivanov has a telephone conversation with US Secretary of State Colin Powell. Ivanov expresses concern about the possible deployment of US forces in Georgia.

28 February 2002 Igor Ivanov is interviewed on TV. He discusses the possibility of US action against Iraq.

US Ambassador to Russia Alexander Vershbow is interviewed on TV on possible joint US-Russian anti-terrorist operations in Georgia.

28 February 2002 The Russian Foreign Ministry criticizes a number of members of the UN Security Council for hampering the implementation of the UN humanitarian programme for Iraq.

Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Saltanov says Russia believes that the world community should promote the dialogue between Baghdad and the UN secretary-general. He says: "We are deeply convinced that everyone should help arrange the dialogue in a bid to find a realistic way out of the situation that has taken shape as far as Iraq is concerned."

28 February 2002 Vladimir Putin and Finnish Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen hold talks in Moscow. They discuss economic and energy relations.

28 February 2002 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov and his Pakistani counterpart, Abdul Sattar, during their telephone talks discuss developments in Afghanistan.

28 February 2002 Russian and Iranian deputy foreign ministers, Aleksandr Saltanov and Mehdi Safari, discuss practical aspects of Russian-Iranian relations at their meeting in Moscow.

March

1 March 2002 Vice-Adm Valentin Kuznetsov, Russian military representative to NATO, takes up his post. He says his main task is "to accomplish President Vladimir Putin's instructions to keep up cooperation with the alliance and bring it to a higher level by means of transforming the '19 plus 1' mechanism of consultations into a new formula of '20'".

1 March 2002 Duma Chairman Gennady Seleznev visits Bulgaria. He says he does not support the idea of NATO expansion and believes that this "archaic" organization should be consigned to history together with the Warsaw Pact.

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1 March 2002 Igor Ivanov says Moscow has taken an interest in Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's proposal that a Russia-NATO summit be held in Italy.

1 March 2002 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov hlds telephone conversations with US National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice and Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. They discuss the situation in Georgia.

1 March 2002 A spokesman for the General Staff of the Russian air force denies reports from Tbilisi to the effect that Russian military aircraft violated Georgian airspace.

1 March 2002 President Vladimir Putin says he supports the international community's efforts in the fight against terrorism. "And if we are talking today about a fight against terrorism in the Pankisi gorge, then we support this fight irrespective of who takes part in it."

1 March 2002 First Deputy Head of the Russian General Staff Col-Gen Yury Baluyevskiy says that Russia cannot give up its main "principle of equal security" during strategic arms negotiations with the USA.

1 March 2002 Deputy Finance Minister Sergey Kolotukhin says Russia's foreign debt, not including government loan guarantees, is expected to shrink to 120-122bn dollars by 1 January 2003.

2 March 2002 Secretary of the Security Council Vladimir Rushaylo visits Georgia to discuss fighting against terrorism.

2 March 2002 Parishioners at the Roman Catholic Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Moscow became participants in a TV link-up in the Vatican and the Russian capital, as well as Rome, Athens, Budapest, Strasbourg, Valencia, and Vienna. The participants in the TV link-up are expected to pray together for the unity of all Christians in Europe. Before the prayer began, the leader of the Russian Catholics, Tadeusz Kondrusiewicz, called on Russian Christians to overcome all difficulties on the way towards unity.

3 March 2002 OPEC Secretary-General Ali Rodriguez visits Moscow. He says Russia "has a very important role in the world oil market".

3 March 2002 The MFA says it deems it necessary to take urgent measures to stop the violence in the Middle East and to resume the negotiating process.

4 March 2002 Fuel and Energy Minister Igor Yusufov has talks in Moscow with OPEC Secretary General Ali Rodriguez Araque and President Rilwanu Lukman. He says Russia and OPEC have coinciding views on a price band for oil.

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4 March 2002 CGS Anatoly Kvashnin says the Strong Resolve 2002 exercise evidences that NATO is preparing its forces for combat operations in two simultaneous military conflicts near Russian and Belarusian borders. Defence minister Sergey Ivanov says he is unconcerned about it.

4 March 2002 NATO Assistant Secretary General Guenther Altenburg arrives in Moscow for talks with Deputy Foreign Minister Yevgeny Gusarov on developing Russia-NATO consultation as a 20 rather than 19+1.

4 March 2002 Foreign minister Igor Ivanov says that the future Russia-NATO cooperation should not be "just a consultative body, as they tend to say in some NATO countries. This must be a working and decision-making one, empowered to make and implement decisions. What we do not need is a mere cosmetic mechanism just to replace the tag on the present Russia-NATO Permanent Joint Council. This is hardly what our times require, and would not be in our interest."

4 March 2002 Deputy Minister of Atomic Energy Yevgeny Reshetnikov says Russia does not have differences with Iran in financing the construction of a nuclear power plant in Bushehr.

4 March 2002 MFA spokesman Aleksandr Yakovenko says the developments in the Middle East "are actually entering a qualitatively new stage of uncontrollable violence with unpredictable consequences ... in this situation, equally tragic for Palestinians and Israelis, we resolutely call on the government of Israel and the leadership of the Palestinian national administration to take immediate urgent measures without any preliminary conditions to ease the tension and normalize the situation."

4 March 2002 Duma chairman Gennady Seleznev says the Duma will not consider recognition of Abkhazia's independence.

4 March 2002 Foreign minister Igor Ivanov says Russia and Georgia have to unite their efforts in fighting the international terrorists which have based themselves in the Pankisi gorge. Ivanov says it is important to know what the goal is with which the so-called "American advisors and aides" are to arrive in Georgia.

4 March 2002 Greek Foreign Minister Yeoryios Papandreou has talks with the Russian special envoy for the Balkans, Vladimir Chizhov, on prospects for European security, the situation in the Balkans and the development of Russian-Greek cooperation.

4 March 2002 Russia exported 24.63m tonnes of oil to countries outside former Soviet territory in January and February, which is 1.78m tonnes or 8% more than in the same period last year. Nearly 24.14m tonnes travelled through pipelines run by the Transneft company in the first two months of 2002. This includes 2.37m tonnes carried through Kazakhstan (compared with 1.14m in 2001), 644,400t

pumped through Azerbaijan (248,000t in 2001) and 73,500t through Turkmenistan. In February, 11.41m tonnes was pipelined abroad by Transneft. Other firms took 491,000t out of Russia in the first two months of 2002 (including 242,600t in February). Among the leading exporters for January and February, were LUKoil (4.47m tonnes in January and February, and 1.94m in February alone), Yukos (3.63m and 1.68m respectively), Surgutneftegaz (2.81m and 1.32m) and Tyumen Oil Company (2.26m and 1.23m). Organizations that are not members of vertically integrated companies exported 1.05m tonnes via Transneft in January and February (557,800t in February), while production sharing agreement operators sent out 94,000t and 49,600t respectively through Transneft channels.

5 March 2002 Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksey Meshkov Russia "has no aspirations to become a member of the European Union in the foreseeable future".

5 March 2002 Akhmed Kadyrov says elections in Chechnya may be held only when two years have elapsed from the end of the counterterrorist operation in the republic. He meets the new head of the OSCE Assistance Group to Chechnya, Jorma Inki, in Groznyy.

5 March 2002 Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov says Kaliningrad Region should develop as a major transport link connecting Russia and Europe.

5 March 2002 A closed meeting of the State Duma Committees on International Affairs and on CIS Affairs takes place in the Duma. The only item on the agenda is discussing a draft statement on the situation in Georgia. Dmitry Rogozin rules out recognition of Abkhazia and South Osetia, but says Russia should develop special ties with its regions.

The Duma prepares a draft statement on the situation in Georgia over the US military presence on its territory. The statement suggests that the Russian Foreign Ministry should raise the question of antiterrorist operations in the Pankisi gorge at the United Nations. The authors of the statement are Dmitry Rogozin, the chairman of the parliamentary international affairs committee, and Boris Pastukhov, the head of the Duma committee for CIS affairs. The draft says that the Duma "welcomes the interest repeatedly expressed by the Abkhaz and South Ossetian leadership and peoples in closer relations with Russia and believes that establishment and development of such relations, in particular in the security field, is consistent with the Russian policy of strict observance of Georgia's territorial integrity and could promote the search for constructive solutions in talks on peaceful settlement of the Georgian-Abkhaz and Georgian-Ossetian conflicts".

The Duma also expressed its concern about the fact that "the Russian administration was not informed by Georgia or by the USA about the plans to send a large group of US military experts to Georgia, and also a large batch of light weapons, army communication facilities and transport". "The fact that the USA does not want to consult Russia on such an important and delicate issue as the deployment of US military experts in a country bordering on Russia diminishes the degree of confidence reached in the Russian-US relations and has a negative impact on bilateral cooperation in the fight against terrorism."

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Duma chairman Gennady Seleznev says a US presence in Georgia is not a tragedy. He says it is unlikely that the Duma would recognise Abkhazia. Dmitry Rogozin rules out recognition of Abkhazia.

5 March 2002 The Russian MOD contradict statements about any kind of withdrawal from Tbilisi by the staff of the group of Russian troops in the Transcaucasus.

5 March 2002 The MFA says the USA introduction of import duties on steel could damage US-Russian relations.

5 March 2002 Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov says "there is no trade war between Russia and the USA".

5 March 2002 The Swiss Attorney-General's Office drops the case against the state secretary of the Union of Belarus and Russia, Pavel Borodin.

6 March 2002 Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov says the USA's possible decision not to support Russia in its efforts to join the WTO is "not very appropriate"

6 March 2002 President Vladimir Putin receives German ex-Chancellor Helmut Kohl in the Kremlin.

6 March 2002 Igor Ivanov attends The Council of the Baltic Sea States meeting in Svetlogorsk in Kaliningrad Region. He says EU expansion should not be at the expense of other countries.

Mikhail Kasyanov says the ideal option for defining the status of Kaliningrad Region after Poland and Lithuania join the EU would be for there to be no visa requirements.

6 March 2002 The Duma passes a resolution criticising the US military presence in Georgia.

Vladislav Ardzinba, the president of Abkhazia, supports the Duma statement on the situation in Georgia. He says Abkhazia wants to establish "very close relations with Russia, including on security issues".

Russian Security Council Secretary Vladimir Rushaylo meets Georgia's ambassador Zurab Abashidze in the Kremlin. They discuss the situation in the Pankisi gorge.

Defence minister Sergey Ivanov says that Russia will take part in an antiterrorist operation in the Pankisi gorge "only if it is invited".

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6 March 2002 Russian industry and science minister Ilya Klebanov says in 2001 Russia received 4.4bn dollars in cash from the export of military products.

6 March 2002 An article in *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* suggests that there is strong opposition in the military to Vladimir Putin's rapprochement with the West.

7 March 2002 Economist Mikhail Delyagin is appointed an aide to Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov.

7 March 2002 The MFA criticises the US State Department's annual report on human rights.

7 March 2002 Deputy Foreign Minister Georgy Mamedov and his Chinese counterpart Wang Guangya have talks on strategic stability and non-proliferation. They say the US withdrawal from the 1972 ABM treaty complicates non-proliferation.

7 March 2002 The MFA categorically rejects claims by Latvian Foreign Minister Indulis Berzins that Moscow pursues a provocative policy towards Latvia.

7 March 2002 Interfax reports that exports of Russian gas to outside the CIS in January 2002 increased by 4.7% (600m cubic metres) year-on-year to amount to 13.4bn cubic metres. Gas supplies to Western Europe increased 3.5% to 8.9bn cubic metres (8.6bn in the same period last year). Russia exported a total of 4.5bn cubic metres of gas to Eastern Europe in January 2002 (up 7.1% year-on-year). 3.4bn cubic metres was supplied to the CIS (down 32%).

Oil exports from Russia to outside the CIS in January 2002 fell 7% year-on-year to 10,266,000 tonnes. In cost terms, these oil exports amounted to 1,272m dollars. Exports of crude to the CIS increased more than 300% year-on-year to 1,286,000 tonnes (105.8m dollars).

7 March 2002 The MFA says Russia is ready "to promote contacts between Iraq and the United Nations by all means available".

7 March 2002 Russian First Deputy Foreign Minister Valery Loshchin meets US special envoy for talks on Nagornyy Karabakh settlement and conflicts in Eurasia Rudolf Perin to discuss settlement of conflicts in Nagornyy Karabakh, the Dnestr region and Abkhazia.

7 March 2002 The national coordination council of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization agrees at a meeting in Moscow that its members should start drafting the organization's charter. The Moscow meeting was attended by representatives of the Foreign Ministries of Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and

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Uzbekistan. The Russian delegation was headed by Russian president's envoy for the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Ambassador Vitaly Vorob'yev.

7 March 2002 Deputy foreign minister Aleksandr Losyukov says Russia does not favour the idea of changing the current format of negotiations with Japan on territorial issues.

7 March 2002 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov has a telephone conversation with his German counterpart, Rudolf Scharping. They discuss mine-clearing in Afghanistan.

7 March 2002 Security Council Secretary Vladimir Rushaylo and his Moldovan counterpart Valery Gurgulya have talks in Moscow.

7 March 2002 Tatarstan's President Mintimer Shaymiyev meets the US ambassador to Russia, Alexander Vershbow, in Kazan.

8 March 2002 Chairman of the Duma international affairs committee Dmitry Rogozin says he does not rule out that Russia and the USA could come into a direct military clash in the Caucasus because of the presence of American military advisers in Georgia. He says Russia should "develop special relations with Abkhazia and South Osetia to defend the interests of citizens residing there".

8 March 2002 First Deputy foreign minister Vyacheslav Trubnikov visits Azerbaijan and has talks with President Heydar Aliyev. He says Russia and Azerbaijan have cooperated well in fighting terrorism in recent years.

9 March 2002 Igor Ivanov says the ban on US poultry import into Russia is a technical issue.

10 March 2002 The head of the Afghan interim administration, Hamed Karzai, arrives in Moscow for talks.

10 March 2002 United Energy Systems and the German energy company E.ON AG, sign a contract to jointly upgrade the Russian energy sector.

10 March 2002 The commander of the Russian Baltic Fleet, Adm Vladimir Valuyev, expresses concern about NATO's "Strong Resolve 2002" strategic exercises on the territories of Poland and Norway, close to the Russian border.

11 March 2002 Deutsche Bank grants a 150m-dollar credit to Gazprom.

11 March 2002 US President George Bush will visit Russia on 23-26 May.

11 March 2002 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov says that if media reports of the list of countries against which the USA could employ nuclear weapons "prove to be true, then this could only be a source of regret and concern".

11 March 2002 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov expresses concern about US military plans for Georgia. He denies press reports about alleged cooperation between Moscow and Tehran in nuclear missile programmes. He says Iraq should let in international inspectors to inspect its weapons facilities.

11 March 2002 Federation Council Chairman Sergey Mironov starts an official visit to Israel. His delegation includes special envoy of the Russian foreign minister and ambassador-at-large Andrey Vdovin.

11 March 2002 Yevgenny Primakov, president of the Russian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, says the conflict in the Middle East can be stopped only through "external interference and a compulsion of the sides to reach a compromise". He says normalization will also require the creation of a Palestinian state, "which would provide for the safety of Israeli borders together with Israeli forces".

11 March 2002 Igor Ivanov says parties to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict may reach a compromise "only under the pressure and with the assistance of the international community ... neither Russia nor anyone else is putting forward new initiatives now ... it is important to join international efforts in order to resume the negotiations." "Terrorism and extremism threaten both Israel and the Palestinian autonomy...efforts must be pooled to isolate the terrorists and to begin the political settlement process."

11 March 2002 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov has talks with the Kuwaiti monarch's special envoy, First Deputy Foreign Minister Khalid Jarallah. He says he has just received a letter from Arab foreign ministers urging Russia "to assume responsibility in defending Palestinian citizens, guaranteeing the observance of humanitarian norms and preserving international peace and security".

11 March 2002 The MFA expresses its bewilderment at the meeting of Carla del Ponte, the prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and Akhmed Zakayev, emissary of Chechen separatist leader Aslan Maskhadov.

11 March 2002 Afghan interim government leader Hamed Karzai discusses Russia's possible role in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. 17 memorandums on cooperation in various areas are signed.

11 March 2002 The Arab League Council calls on Russia to defend the rights of Palestinians.

11 March 2002 Federation Council Chairman Sergey Mironov cancels his meeting with head of the Palestinian National Authority Yasir Arafat, which was scheduled for 12 March. Mironov says "when pondering on the origin of terrorist acts in Afghanistan, Chechnya and Israel, I have concluded that they have the same roots, financial ones above all". "In this situation, I am not prepared to make this polite gesture."

12 March 2002 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov says Russia is not conducting "any secret consultations" on the settlement of the Iraqi issue. He says Russia "stands firmly in favour of a political settlement of the situation in Iraq on the basis of the relevant UN Security Council resolution and international law".

12 March 2002 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov warns in Washington against "excessive optimism" over the situation in Afghanistan. He is beginning a visit to the USA to discuss disarmament. He also discusses the possible anti-terrorist operation in Georgia.

12 March 2002 First Deputy Chief of the General Staff Yury Baluyevskiy says Russia may respond to the US withdrawal from the 1972 ABM treaty. "We do not rule out that in light of analysing the military-political situation and assessing US testing plans and efforts in the ABM sphere, Russia, if necessary, may take appropriate, including asymmetrical, and effective steps aimed at averting new threats and challenges to Russia's security." He says Russia fully understands the decision by Central Asian states to allow US forces to be deployed on their territory.

Col-Gen Baluyevskiy says Russia wants a full say in security matters at NATO. "Russia should become an equal partner of NATO in matters concerning the formation of a new European security system." He says Russia is not seeking to become a member of NATO at any cost. Baluyevsky cites the priorities of Russia-NATO cooperation contacts as peacekeeping and settlement of crisis situations.

12 March 2002 Igor Ivanov says there has been no change in Russia's position with regard to solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and to the Middle East settlement. He says Moscow continues to regard Arafat as the leader of the Palestinian people.

12 March 2002 The secretary-general of the CIS Collective Security Council, Valery Nikolayenko, has talks in Beijing with the Chinese MFA.

12 March 2002 Alvaro Silva Calderon, the Venezuelan minister of energy and mines, has talks with Russian Energy Minister Igor Yusufov on oil prices.

12 March 2002 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov has talks in Moscow with Armenian foreign minister Vardan Oskanyan.

12 March 2002 The Russian government states it regards introducing oil export quotas as inadvisable as current export levels help maintain the price of oil on the foreign market at the level to ensure budget revenue targets.

12 March 2002 The Council of Ministers of the Russo-Belarusian Union states in Minsk that Russia and Belarus will sign before 1 April a package of documents on creating a single economic space of the union state.

12 March 2002 The MFA says it "regards as very serious" the situation which has come about in the Kodori gorge, an area in northeastern Abkhazia partly controlled by the Georgian authorities. It says on 17 January, in line with bilateral accords reached with Abkhazia, Tbilisi undertook to withdraw its military personnel from the Kodori gorge, but "in reality the Georgian side has been sabotaging the implementation of this agreement".

12 March 2002 Tajik Foreign Minister Talbak Nazarov and Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Valery Loshchinin meet as part of the sixth session of the Russian-Tajik intergovernmental commission on economic cooperation. The meeting resulted in the signing of a cooperation programme between the two foreign ministries for 2002.

13 March 2002 Afghan interim government leader Hamed Karzai says Afghanistan needs cooperation with Russia in the military field because its military equipment was made mainly in the Soviet Union. He says he has no objections to Russian peacekeeping forces in Afghanistan.

13 March 2002 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov and deputy foreign minister Aleksandr Losyukov have talks in Moscow with Japanese deputy foreign minister Toshiyuki Takano.

Igor Ivanov says Russia's position as regards the Kuril Islands has not changed in any way since the Russo-Japanese summit in Irkutsk in March 2001. He is addressing the Duma. He says there are no secret agreements with Japan on the southern Kuriles.

13 March 2002 Vladimir Putin gives an interview to *Izvestiya*. He discusses Russo-US relations.

13 March 2002 Igor Ivanov criticises the recent US document on nuclear strategy as being out of line with the Russia-US dialogue.

13 March 2002 *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* discusses possible changes to Russian nuclear strategy in the wake of US secession from the ABM treaty.

13 March 2002 The Duma issues a long statement denouncing US policy towards Iran, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Iraq. A total of 291 deputies voted in favour of the statement "On the threats to global security in connection with the antiterrorist operation", with six votes against and one abstention.

13 March 2002 President Vladimir Putin orders Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov to take measures to ensure harmony between the foreign policy moves of the executive branch and parliament.

13 March 2002 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov welcomes the adoption of a new resolution on the Middle East by the UN Security Council (UNSC 1937), which calls for a Palestinian state. Ivanov states that Russia, the US, the European Union and the UN will coordinate their actions on the basis of this resolution.

The MFA welcomes UNSC Resolution 1937. It says the resolution "will substantially strengthen the international legal basis for stepping up joint international efforts for a Middle East settlement, in which Russia, as a cosponsor, will continue to be most actively involved". It recognises the right of the Palestinian people to have their own state.

13 March 2002 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov says the resolution of the Abkhaz problem by military means would be dangerous. He addresses the Duma. He says this could destabilise Georgia itself.

13 March 2002 Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan sign a joint statement on expanding the international operation to render humanitarian aid to Afghanistan and promote a post-conflict settlement in the Central Asian region. Emergencies Minister Sergey Shoygu says the second phase of the operation to deliver 7,000 tonnes of food from the Kyrgyz city of Osh to Fayzabad in Afghanistan under the UN World Food Programme will start in four days.

13 March 2002 Defence minister Sergey Ivanov says Russia has irrefutable proof of links between Chechen rebels and Osama bin Laden's terrorists.

14 March 2002 Vladimir Putin has talks in Moscow with Malaysian prime minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir bin Mohamad. They discuss military cooperation. Russia and Malaysia will set up a joint aerospace agency.

14 March 2002 Atomic Energy minister Aleksandr Rumyantsev says the commitments to build a nuclear power plant in Iran will be fully met. Under the contract, the first reactor in Bushehr will go on line in 2004.

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14 March 2002 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov says that Moscow should speak in one voice on the international arena. "It is quite obvious that a state willing to play a key role on the international arena should speak in one voice." He says discussions in various forms and at various levels are possible at home, but abroad we should maintain one position.

14 March 2002 Deputy Economics Minister Maksim Medvedkov says the Russian government has approved directives on Russia's stance at the next round of talks on admission to the World Trade Organization.

15 March 2002 The Duma rejects the draft statement "On measures to put a stop to violence and resume the Middle East process."

Vladimir Putin has a telephone conversation with chairman of the PLO executive committee and leader of the Palestinian National Authority Yasir Arafat. He also has a telephone conversation with Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon.

15 March 2002 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov expresses satisfaction with Washington's explanations concerning an American press report, claiming that Russia is on the list of the countries against which the USA could use its nuclear weapons.

15 March 2002 Sergey Ivanov says Moscow expects NATO to make more profound and constructive proposals on cooperation in the format of 20. He says the NATO proposals cover only the form and procedure, rather than an essential change. The NATO draft is a step backward from what British Prime Minister Tony Blair suggested as recently as six months ago.

15 March 2002 Emergencies Minister Sergey Shoygu and Chinese Minister of Civil Affairs Doje Cering sign a memorandum on cooperation following talks in Beijing.

15 March 2002 The Audit Chamber completes the audit on the state of Russia's external debts to former socialist countries at the Ministry of Finance and Vneshekonombank of the Russian Federation. The audit materials state that Russia inherited from the USSR a debt of 30bn dollars to former socialist countries. In the 1990s debt settlement agreements were signed with Bulgaria, Hungary, China, Romania, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Poland and Laos. As a result, Russia's restructured debt comprised 8.8bn dollars plus 1.2bn dollars interest. According to Vneshekonombank data, as of today 5.7bn dollars of the restructured debt and 0.5bn dollars of interest remain unpaid. Russia has fully paid off its debt only to Poland.

15 March 2002 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov and US Secretary of State Colin Powell discuss key aspects of Russian-American relations.

Russia and the USA hold steel trade consultations in Paris.

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15 March 2002 The MFA says it believes that an agreement to create a country called Serbia and Montenegro reflects the will of the people of these republics, which previously made up Yugoslavia.

15 March 2002 *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* reports that Gazprom has acquired 49% of the Slovak gas company Slovensky Plynarensky Priemysel.

15 March 2002 Russia has started building a nuclear power station in the Indian city of Kudankulam, hoping to complete the first stage of work in late March.

15 March 2002 The Duma rejects the draft statement "On measures to put a stop to violence and resume the Middle East process".

15 March 2002 Vladimir Putin has a telephone conversation with chairman of the PLO executive committee and leader of the Palestinian National Authority Yasir Arafat and also with Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

15 March 2002 *Kommersant* gives an update on the state of progress on the Blue Stream pipeline between Russia and Turkey.

15 March 2002 The MFA says armed clashes in the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict zone on the Inguri river "are indicative of the intentions of certain forces in Georgia to destabilize the situation in the conflict zone".

16 March 2002 Igor Ivanov expresses his opposition to using military force against Iraq.

16 March 2002 Iraqi Oil Minister Amir Muhammad Rashid al-Ubaydi visits Moscow. He intends to sign a long-term programme of cooperation in the economic and scientific spheres with Russia.

17 March 2002 Defence minister Sergey Ivanov says "it will take years, not months" to win a full victory over terrorism in Afghanistan.

17 March 2002 Igor Ivanov's special Middle East envoy, Andrey Vdovin, has begun a tour of Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Vdovin's mission is closely coordinated with efforts by other international mediators, including the US envoy, Anthony Zinni.

17 March 2002 Deputy prime minister Viktor Khristenko says the schedule of Russian oil exports, confirmed for the second quarter of the year, will remain at the first quarter's level.

Dr Mark A Smith

17 March 2002 The presidents of Russia, Ukraine and Moldova hold a summit in Odessa. They discuss economic cooperation.

17 March 2002 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says that, in principle, he does not have objections to the US plans of storing some of the warheads removed from the nuclear missiles in the course of reducing the strategic arsenals of Russia and the United States.

18 March 2002 Fuel and Energy Minister Igor Yusufov opens the meeting of the Russia-Iraq intergovernmental commission on trade, economic and science-and-technology cooperation.

18 March 2002 The Duma says a peace treaty with Japan at the cost of territorial concessions would be unacceptable to Russia.

18 March 2002 Head of the Duma Defence Committee Andrey Nikolayev says he thinks the implementation of US military doctrine will inevitably lead to an arms build-up.

18 March 2002 Vladimir Putin appoints Sergey Razov to the post of deputy foreign minister. Razov will be in charge of Russia's relations with CIS countries.

18 March 2002 The MFA issues a statement on the Middle East. It states Moscow believes that "chances to ease tensions have appeared in the Middle East". "These chances must be used, and all possible measures should be taken to overcome Palestinian-Israeli confrontation and resume progress towards a comprehensive settlement of the conflict between Israel and the Arabs ... Moscow is therefore expressing consistent support for immediate and mutual steps which Palestine and Israel should make to end violence, normalize the situation and resume talks in line with the Tenet-Mitchell scheme."

Foreign minister's special envoy for the Middle East peace process, Andrey Vdovin, and Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal, says Russia and Saudi Arabia share the view that a scenario which involves the use of force to resolve the problem of Iraq is fraught with serious negative consequences for stability in the entire Middle East.

Andrey Vdovin, special envoy of the Russian foreign minister, had talks with Organization of the Islamic Conference Secretary-General Abdelouahed Belkeziz at Jeddah.

19 March 2002 Amir Muhammad Rashid al-Ubaydi, Iraqi oil minister says Russian oil companies should actively take part in the development of petroleum deposits in Iraq.

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19 March 2002 Interior Minister Boris Gryzlov holds a meeting with Israeli Minister of Interior Security Uzi Landau.

19 March 2002 Igor Ivanov visits Britain. He says Russia does not plan to join either NATO or the EU.

Igor Ivanov says Russia strongly opposes the use of force against Iraq, but will not pull out of the antiterrorist coalition if that takes place.

20 March 2002 First Deputy Secretary of the Russian Security Council Vladislav Sherstyuk says by the year 2010, spending on science in Russia will have increased five-fold.

20 March 2002 Airborne Troops Commander Georgy Shpak appoints Col Mikhail Los head of the airborne operations group in the North Caucasus and deputy commander of the combined federal force in Chechnya.

20 March 2002 Prime minister Mikhail Kasyanov meets the directors of Russia's major oil companies.

20 March 2002 Vladimir Putin has a conference with the MOD leadership to work out a defence development strategy. They discuss military reform and the 10 year armaments programme. Putin says Russia must promptly respond to the latest changes in the country and the world, and serious geopolitical changes.

20 March 2002 The Secretary-General of the CIS Collective Security Treaty council, Valery Nikolayenko, says US military bases on the territories of Central Asian countries do not pose a threat to Russia's security. The council includes Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Armenia. He also says that the decision of the Tajik and Kyrgyz leadership to permit the deployment of US military bases on their territory "does not contradict the Collective Security Treaty".

20 March 2002 Commander-in-Chief of the US Central Command Gen Tommy Franks, who is currently in charge of running the USA's military operations in Afghanistan, meets Russian First Deputy Emergencies Minister Yury Vorob'yev in Moscow.

20 March 2002 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov reveals that subsidiaries of the international terrorist organization Al-Qa'idah are operating in 60 states. He meets US General Tommy Franks in Moscow.

20 March 2002 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov, in London, describes statements by the director of the USA's CIA, George Tenet, on Iraq's possible ties with Al Qa'idah as "groundless". Ivanov says the Iraqi issue must be dealt with on the basis of UN resolutions.

20 March 2002 Andrey Vdovin, the Russian foreign minister's Middle East envoy, visits Saudi Arabia.

21 March 2002 The MFA accuses Georgia of failure to take real steps to fight terrorism and of making preparations for new attempts to solve the Abkhaz problem by force.

21 March 2002 Russian peacekeeping forces are seized in Georgia. Head of the Duma international affairs committee Dmitry Rogozin says "attempts are being made to draw Russia into a conflict on the territory of another state and this situation can no longer be tolerated".

21 March 2002 Anatoly Chubays, the head of United Energy Systems, calls for the destruction of the "iron curtain" between the energy systems of the East and the West. He made the appeal during a joint meeting of the CIS Electric Power Council and the Union of the Electric Industry (Eurelectric) in Warsaw.

21 March 2002 Security Council secretary Vladimir Rushaylo says Russia does not intend to set up its own national missile defence system in response to the US deployment of a national antimissile defence system.

21 March 2002 Foreign minister Igor Ivanov says Russia will seek to have a planned "20" format accord on its relations with NATO drafted before a planned ministerial meeting of the Russia-NATO Permanent Joint Council in Reykjavik in mid-May.

Three committees of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly meet in the Federation Council. Duma First Deputy Chairman Lyubov Sliska says Russia does not intend to seek membership of NATO. She says the main components of Russia's relationship with NATO could include the fight against international terrorism, nonproliferation of mass destruction weapons and security in the European continent. "We attach great importance to the joint European missile defence project."

21 March 2002 Vladimir Rushaylo, the secretary of the Russian Federation's Security Council, says the role of chief coordinator in the fight against terrorism should be the UN. He says the presence of US forces in Georgia and Central Asia is justified in the context of the fight against international terrorism. He says no changes have been made to Russia's international security blueprint since 11 September.

21 March 2002 Igor Ivanov says in Germany that "Russia and the Federal Republic have traditionally shouldered and continue to shoulder special responsibility for the destiny of the European continent...cooperation between the two is also of key importance nowadays for shaping up a pan-European area." Trade turnover has risen from DM26.5bn to DM47.5bn. "Germany's total financial contributions to the

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Russian economy exceed 6bn dollars, which amounts to some 18% of all foreign investment".

22 March 2002 The Duma votes unanimously to adopt the decree "On the escalation of tension over Abkhazia and South Osetia".

22 March 2002 The MFA's Middle East envoy, Andrey Vdovin, holds a series of meetings with representatives of the Palestinian and Israeli leaderships.

22 March 2002 Duma International Affairs Committee chairman Dmitry Rogozin says Russia and NATO should not rush to create the so-called "20" format.

22 March 2002 Deputy foreign minister Georgy Mamedov expresses satisfaction with recent Russian-US talks to cut strategic weapons. "On the whole, we are satisfied with the negotiations in Geneva." Russia and the United States plan to cut the number of warheads to between 1,700 and 2,200 each by 2012. Today each country has about 6,000 warheads.

22 March 2002 Representatives of Russia's secret services visit the US base in Guantanamo, Cuba. A number of ethnic Chechen citizens of Russia are at the base's camp for rebels from Afghanistan.

23 March 2002 Yevgenny Primakov says that a military operation against Iraq would become "a historic mistake for the United States". He says that this would shrink the anti-terrorist coalition, and that after the 11 September terror attacks, one could have expected the Americans "to try to get rid of the main basis for terrorism - the conflict in the Middle East - for instance, through expanding the number of mediators, especially bearing in mind that many European countries were prepared for this".

24 March 2002 Andrey Vdovin visits Syria.

25 March 2002 The MFA says Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Razov's duties are as follows - being in charge of relations with Central, Eastern and Southeastern European countries including "the Balkan knot" - and the Kaliningrad Region.

25 March 2002 Andrey Vdovin visits Lebanon.

25 March 2002 A Russian Orthodox Church delegation headed by Metropolitan of Smolensk and Kaliningrad Kirill visits Iraq.

Dr Mark A Smith

25 March 2002 Mikhail Kasyanov visits Mongolia. He and Mongolian prime minister Nambaryn Enhbayar discuss an oil pipeline through Mongolia to China. They sign a protocol on economic and trade cooperation.

25 March 2002 A major anti-terrorist conference takes place in St Petersburg. Gennady Seleznev suggests that NATO become an anti-terrorist centre.

25 March 2002 The CIS military cooperation coordination HQ says that a regional air defence command post is to be set up in the south of the CIS within the framework of the united air defence system. Tentatively the command post will be set up in Kazakhstan. All the main efforts should be completed by 2005.

25 March 2002 Tatarstan President Mintimer Shaymiyev visits Sweden.

25 March 2002 Sergey Lavrov, Russian Ambassador to the UN, says an attempt to apply force against Iraq "would be a mistake with consequences well beyond the Persian Gulf area".

25 March 2002 Moroccan Minister of Social Development, Solidarity, Employment and Vocational Training Abbas al-Fassi visits Moscow and meets Igor Ivanov.

26 March 2002 The Council of the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly and PACE issue a declaration stating their readiness to act in concert in the cause of peace, progress and mutual understanding. The document was signed by the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly Council Chairman Sergey Mironov and PACE Chairman Peter Schieder.

26 March 2002 Igor Ivanov says at PACE that Moscow wants the European standards of the rights of ethnic minorities to apply to the Russian speakers of Latvia and Estonia.

26 March 2002 Russia and Britain sign a memorandum agreeing to pool efforts to render assistance to third countries in case of emergencies and natural calamities.

26 March 2002 Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov visits Vietnam.

26 March 2002 Vladimir Putin sends a message to the Arab League which is meeting in Beirut. He says there can be no military solution to the crisis over the Palestinian territories.

26 March 2002 The Russian military leadership denies media reports that certain units of the 58th Army, deployed near Abkhazia and South Osetia, have been put on alert.

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The MFA denies media speculation that Russian peacekeepers carried out a so-called mopping-up operation in the village of Anaklia, located in the Zugdidi District of Georgia, last night.

Igor Ivanov says Russia respects Georgian sovereignty concerning the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict. He also says the channels by which help comes to Chechen gunmen go by the territory of the Pankisi Gorge of Georgia.

The MFA sends a note to the Georgian embassy in Moscow demanding the immediate arrest and extradition to Russia of Chechen field commander Ruslan Gelayev "for criminal prosecution".

26 March 2002 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov says that there is no possibility of creating an international tribunal for Chechnya in The Hague.

26 March 2002 Igor Ivanov says Kaliningrad Region is a constituent part of the Russian Federation and will remain so.

26 March 2002 A conference of chiefs of security and law-enforcement agencies of CIS, G8, NATO, European Union and Shanghai Cooperation Organization countries in St Petersburg agree to set up a permanent working group for coordination of the fight against terrorism.

26 March 2002 Duma chairman Gennady Seleznev criticizes statements made about Russia by the speaker of the Georgian parliament, Nino Burjanadze. Seleznev is speaking at the 19th plenary session of the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly in St Petersburg. He says this is an attempt to deflect public opinion from Georgia's internal problems.

26 March 2002 Russian Ambassador to Ukraine Viktor Chernomyrdin is interviewed in *Kievskiy Telegraf*. He accuses the USA of interfering in the Ukrainian general election campaign.

27 March 2002 The CIS MPA and PACE meet in St Petersburg. They discuss the anti-terrorist struggle.

27 March 2002 The tenth meeting of the Committee of CIS Chiefs of Staff, chaired by the chief of the General Staff of the Russian armed forces, Army Gen Anatoly Kvashnin, discusses measures to improve the regional security system. Chiefs of the general and main staffs of the armed forces of the commonwealth, representatives of the Collective Security Council, and generals and officers of the staff set up to coordinate military cooperation of the CIS members states attended the meeting. They say that the armed forces of the CIS states which are parties to the Collective Security Treaty will not be used in the antiterrorist operation in Afghanistan. They also discuss the CIS rapid reaction force. The force is based on the battalions of the four countries which are members of the Collective Security Treaty - Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Russia is represented in

the collective rapid reaction force by a strengthened motor rifle battalion, formed on the basis of one military unit of the 201st motor rifle division in Tajikistan. The battalion is designated to independently conduct combat activities in the region. It includes reconnaissance, artillery, anti-aircraft, communications, medical and flame-throwing sub-units. The personnel of the battalion has been recruited from among contract servicemen and volunteers.

27 March 2002 Council of Europe Secretary-General Walter Schwimmer says there has been significant progress in efforts to restore the rule of law in Chechnya.

27 March 2002 The MFA condemns terrorist incidents in Abkhazia.

27 March 2002 The MFA criticises Moldovan nationalist protests against the government in Moldova.

27 March 2002 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov has a phone talk with Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, during which he called on the Israelis and Palestinians "to strengthen and develop positive trends" that have arisen as a result of "the steps made by the sides to de-escalate" tensions. Ivanov says: "The main thing is to reach cease-fire agreements and start implementing the Tenet plan and the recommendations proposed by the Mitchell committee." Ivanov "confirmed the policy of Russia, which is acting in coordination with the USA, the EU and the UN, aimed at stepping up efforts to overcome the Palestinian-Israeli confrontation and resume the progress towards an all-inclusive Arab-Israeli settlement based on the Madrid principles, UN Security Council Resolutions 242, 338 and 1397, and the existing agreements and deals".

27 March 2002 Minister of Atomic Energy Aleksandr Rumyantsev says Russia will supply fresh nuclear fuel to Iran for the Bushehr nuclear power plant on condition that it be returned to Russia for reprocessing.

Rumyantsev says construction of Russian-designed nuclear power plants in China, India, Iran and Bulgaria will continue.

27 March 2002 Greek ambassador to Russia Dimitrios Paraskevopoulos says Athens attaches great significance to the construction of an oil pipeline from Bourgas (Bulgaria) to Alexandroupolis (Greece). Russia will be involved in the implementation of this project.

28 March 2002 The Security Council secretaries of the "Caucasus Four" countries (Russia, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan) meet in Sochi.

28 March 2002 Russian-American consultations on the UN humanitarian programme for Iraq take place in Moscow. They discuss the goods review list for Iraq. The list must be drafted by May 2002 in compliance with resolution 1382 of the UN Security Council, which was adopted in November 2001 and extended the

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UN oil-for-food programme for Iraq for six months. Moscow is trying "to lift the barriers" to the supply of commodities, equipment and services Iraq needs to rebuild its economy and infrastructure.

28 March 2002 Deputy Prime Minister Valentina Matviyenko dismisses charges that Russia is intervening in the Ukrainian parliamentary election campaign.

28 March 2002 The MFA urges the Palestinian National Authority "to take the toughest measures without delay to curb the extremists". The MFA condemns the suicide bombing in Netanya, Israel.

28 March 2002 Federation Council chairman and PACE Secretary General Peter Schieder criticise US double standards in fighting terrorism.

28 March 2002 Deputy foreign minister Anatoly Safonov says Russia and NATO have set up an interdepartmental working group which will be permanently employed in issues involving cooperation with NATO on problems of international terrorism.

28 March 2002 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov and US Secretary of State Colin Powell say bilateral intensive consultations have facilitated progress at the talks on preparing a treaty on the reduction of strategic offensive arms (START-3).

29 March 2002 The head of the Duma international affairs committee, Dmitry Rogozin, says that both sides in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict must be compelled to accept peace immediately. "The mutual Israeli-Palestinian aggression has entered the stage where the imposition of peace should be the single common line of the world community interested in a Middle East settlement." He says the Americans should join the other co-sponsors in solving the question of peacekeepers' deployment in the Middle East as quickly as possible. If the USA did so, "this would also pose a question for Russia".

A group of Russian Duma deputies drafts an appeal to the Russian president asking him to offer political asylum to Palestinian National Authority leader Yasir Arafat and other members of the Palestinian national autonomy.

The Egyptian embassy in Moscow issues a statement urging Russia and the USA to intervene in the current developments in the Middle East.

The Palestinian ambassador in Moscow, Khairi al-Oridi says the Palestinian leadership has called on Russia to intervene urgently in the Middle East conflict "before a catastrophe happens".

Duma Chairman Gennady Seleznev believes that the UN Security Council should immediately convene a meeting aimed at stopping large-scale bloodshed in the Middle East. He says an international peacekeeping force should be sent there.

Dr Mark A Smith

Igor Ivanov issues a statement on the Middle East. He expresses support for the decisions of the Arab League in Beirut on the Arab-Israeli conflict which expressed support for the Saudi peace plan.

29 March 2002 The special envoy of the Russian foreign minister on the Middle East settlement and ambassador at large, Andrey Vdovin, meets the Lebanese prime minister in Beirut.

29 March 2002 Kazakh Foreign Minister Kasymzhomart Tokayev says Russia and Kazakhstan are close to signing the protocol on defining the modified median line in the Caspian Sea. He has been holding talks with Igor Ivanov.

29 March 2002 The Russian Embassy in Kyrgyzstan says Russia will support Kyrgyzstan if it faces an incursion from Islamic terrorists.

29 March 2002 Federation Council speaker Sergey Mironov says that he believes Belarus has problems with democratic rights.

30 March 2002 Vladimir Putin hosts the meeting of the Security Council secretaries of the four Caucasus countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Russia) in Sochi. He calls for preventing "possible military actions along the Georgian-Abkhaz border".

30 March The MFA calls for the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1402 calling for an Israeli-Palestinian ceasefire.

Russia and the League of Arab States demand an immediate cease-fire and the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Palestinian towns, including Ramallah. This was the shared view expressed by Igor Ivanov and Arab League Secretary-General Amr Musa during a telephone conversation.

30 March 2002 MFA special envoy Andrey Vdovin meets PLO leader Yasir Arafat's political adviser Saib Arika in Jericho to discuss the situation on the Palestinian territories. International mediators from Russia, the United States, the European Union and the United Nations meet in Jerusalem to discuss "a way out of the situation".

Patriarch Aleksey II of Moscow and All Russia warns that the isolation of Palestinian leader Yasir Arafat will exacerbate the Middle East conflict.

30 March 2002 The president of the committee for international, cultural, scientific and business cooperation with Iraq, Yury Shafranik, says Russia and Iraq plan to sign a long-term cooperation programme in Baghdad in late April 2002.

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30 March 2002 Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Aleksey II has sent his Easter greetings to the Pope. The patriarch made it clear that there was no question of any progress in the settlement of the inter-church crisis arising from the Vatican's decision to establish Catholic dioceses in Russia instead of apostolic administrations.

30 March 2002 Georgian and Russian Security Council Secretaries Tedo Japaridze and Vladimir Rushaylo meet and discuss Abkhazia and Georgian-US military cooperation.

30 March 2002 A Baltic Anticriminal and Antiterrorist Forum (BAAS) is set up. This consists of the law-enforcement agencies of Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Russia.

31 March 2002 MFA spokesman Aleksandr Yakovenko says the Mideast situation is running out of control. "Both parties must abide by resolution 1402 of the UN Security Council and immediately stop the violence, ease the tension and unblock the way to normalization under the Tenet-Mitchell formula."

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