

Russian Foreign Policy: Chronology

January-March 2003

January

1 January 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Chizhov says Russia needs the EU to support her efforts to join the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

1 January 2003 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov says Russia is ready to discuss new forms of joint actions on the Chechnya problem with the OSCE following the end of the OSCE mandate.

Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Chizhov says Russia's goal is to establish efficient cooperation with NATO rather than seek a transformation of that alliance into some kind of a political structure. "There is every ground to believe that NATO will remain a union of countries with a strong military underpinning in the foreseeable future ... Russia will make practical efforts to help it turn from a structure of the Cold War era to one that is fighting with the global challenges of our time - a realistic plan that has become possible after the emergence of the Russia-NATO council."

2 January 2003 The Foreign Ministry (MFA) says Russian troops will remain in the Dnestr region after Moscow ships Russian military property from the area. They will perform a peacekeeping role.

4 January 2003 The South Korean Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kim Hang-kyung, arrives in Moscow for talks on the North Korea nuclear issue. First Deputy Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Trubnikov says North Korea, as a signatory to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), should strictly meet its commitments.

Vyacheslav Trubnikov says Israel should join the NPT.

4 January 2003 *Trud* holds a round table discussion on "Iraq's prospects and Russia's interests", organized by the Council on Foreign and Defence Policy in conjunction with the journal *Russia in Global Politics*.

5 January 2003 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says military action by the USA and its allies against Iraq without the sanction of the UN will be viewed by Moscow as illegitimate and unjustified. He rejects US criticisms of Syria and Iran for supporting terrorism.

5 January 2003 South Korean First Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade Kim Hang-kyung meets Russian deputy foreign ministers Aleksandr Losyukov and Georgiy Mamedov. They call for resolving the North Korean nuclear problem by diplomatic means. They call for a resumption of the US-North Korean dialogue and compliance with the 1994 agreement.

6 January 2003 The MFA welcomes the resolution adopted by the executive board of the International Atomic Energy Authority, the IAEA in response to the report on the implementation of the agreement between the agency and North Korea on the use of guarantees in relation to the treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Russia's permanent representative at the international organizations in Vienna, Ambassador Grigoriy Berdennikov, expresses alarm over North Korea's defiance of the IAEA at a session of the IAEA board of governors.

7 January 2003 Energy Minister Igor Yusufov visits Qatar. He also has talks with Abdallah al-Atiyah, the OPEC chairman-in-office, to discuss Russia-OPEC cooperation. Earlier, Igor Yusufov visited Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

8 January 2003 Igor Ivanov says Russia will continue working with the OSCE in Chechnya, even though the mandate for the organization's mission in Chechnya has come to an end.

8 January 2003 The MFA criticizes Israel for banning the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) from taking part in a planned international meeting in London to help carry out PNA reforms.

8 January 2003 French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin visits Moscow.

8 January 2003 The MFA expresses concern that NATO countries are deliberately hindering the ratification of the Adapted Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty).

8 January 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Losyukov says that Moscow will not use its close ties with Pyongyang to resolve North Korea's nuclear problem.

9 January 2003 The Central Bank states that Russia's international reserves fell by 0.86% (413m dollars) from 48.205bn dollars to 47.792bn dollars in December.

9 January 2003 Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi visits Moscow for talks with Vladimir Putin.

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9 January 2003 The MFA says Russia has presented to the USA a new draft political agreement in the antiballistic-missile field which is aimed at strengthening strategic stability.

9 January 2003 The MFA says the Baltic states must join the CFE.

9 January 2003 The first deputy chief of the General Staff, Col-Gen Yuriy Baluyevskiy says the MOD believes it will be possible to start specific work to create a non-strategic anti-missile defence for a theatre of combat operations in Europe in 2003.

9 January 2003 *Krasnaya Zvezda* analyses the US build up against Iraq.

9 January 2003 An article in *Vremya Novostey* by Maj-Gen Vladimir Dvorkin analyses the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT) signed by the presidents of Russia and the United States in May 2002.

9 January 2003 Deputy Chief of the General Staff, Col-Gen Yuriy Baluyevskiy, is interviewed in *Moskovskiy Komsomolets*. He discusses Russian security policy in the CIS, ties with China, possible US-Iraq war and NMD.

10 January 2003 The MFA issues a statement expressing grave concern over the intentions of North Korea to withdraw from the NPT Treaty.

10 January 2003 Vladimir Putin has talks with visiting Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi. They sign a joint statement on a Russian-Japanese action plan.

10 January 2003 The MFA says it intends to try to further moderate the UN Security Council criteria governing lorry shipments to Iraq.

11 January 2003 The MFA says it is discussing a package plan for the North Korean problem with USA, France, China and the Republic of Korea.

11 January 2003 Foreign minister Igor Ivanov writes in *Izvestiya* on Russia-EU relations.

Igor Ivanov calls on the EU to begin talks on visa-free visits.

11 January 2003 The prime ministers of the member states of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) (Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Finland and Sweden) meet in Kirkenes.

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Finnish Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen and his Russian counterpart Mikhail Kasyanov meet in Norway. They discuss the EU Northern Dimension programme.

12 January 2003 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says there should be no nuclear weapons on the Korean peninsula. He says the North Korean crisis is not a direct threat to Russia.

12 January 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Losyukov says the Russian authorities are "weighing up the pros and cons" of projects for oil pipelines linking Angarsk with the Chinese town of Daqing and Nakhodka. Losyukov has talks in Khabarovsk with Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi. The Angarsk-Daqing pipeline will be 2,400 km long. It will cost 2bn dollars and during a 25-year lifespan would supply 700m tonnes of Russian oil to China. Yukos currently sends 1.4m tonnes a year by rail. According to preliminary estimates by Japanese experts, it would cost 5bn dollars to lay a 3,800-km pipeline from Angarsk to the Pacific coast. They believe it would be viable if it could pump up to 1m barrels a day.

12 January 2003 Georgiy Petrov, vice-president of the Russian Chamber of Commerce and Trade says Russian business stands to lose in Iraq if there is a war. "Russian companies have major economic interests in Iraq. They have signed contracts with that country, are involved in tenders, and are prepared to build railways and ports in Iraq. Iraq is Russia's debtor, and is also a vast market for selling equipment for the steel, oil and petrochemical industries."

12 January 2003 The presidential envoy in the Siberian Federal District, Leonid Drachevskiy, and French Foreign Minister Dominique Villepin meet in Novosibirsk.

13 January 2003 Russo-Iranian talks take place in Moscow. The Russian delegation is led by First Deputy Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Trubnikov, and the Iranian by Deputy Foreign Minister Mohsen Aminzadeh. They discuss the war on terrorism.

13 January 2003 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov has a telephone conversation with British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw to discuss the situation in the Middle East.

13 January 2003 The MFA says Moscow hopes that Tbilisi will take a positive decision on extending the mandate of the CIS collective peacekeeping forces in the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict zone.

First Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Navy and Chief of the Navy Main Staff Adm Viktor Kravchenko deems groundless the claim of Georgian Foreign Minister Irakli Menagharishvili that "Georgia did not get the part of the Black Sea fleet that rightly belonged to it".

13 January 2003 Sergey Yastrzhembskiy publishes an article *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* on Russia's interests in the Baltic states.

13 January 2003 Atomic Energy Minister Aleksandr Rumyantsev says: "To the best of our knowledge, there is certainly no know-how to produce nuclear weapons in North Korea. It would have been very easy to spot, had this kind of know-how been in development. And their declarations to the effect that their nuclear programmes are purely peaceful can only be welcomed."

14 January 2003 The Chechen separatist president's special envoy Akhmed Zakayev is interviewed in the Azeri newspaper *Zerkalo*. He calls on the Azerbaijani and Georgian presidents to broker the talks between Russia and Chechnya.

14 January 2003 The MFA says Russia and Syria have reached a basic understanding on drafting agreements under which Russia would build a nuclear power plant and a desalination unit on the basis of an atomic reactor in Syria. Syrian Vice-President Abd-al-Halim Khaddam arrives in Moscow.

Trade turnover between the two countries in 2001 was 163m dollars (in 2000, 160m dollars). Russian exports to Syria in 2001 totalled 95m dollars and imports 68m dollars. The overall volume of technical assistance Russia provided to Syria in 2002 was worth 13.7m dollars.

14 January 2003 The MFA welcomes the London conference on Palestine organised by the UK government. It regrets Israel's refusal to allow Palestinian representatives to travel to the conference. The Russian representative at the conference is the MFA's special representative on a Middle East settlement, roving ambassador Andrey Vdovin.

Israeli Foreign Minister Binyamin Netanyahu telephones his Russian counterpart, Igor Ivanov, to discuss "a number of important aspects of the situation in the Middle East."

14 January 2003 IAEA head Muhammad al-Baradi'i, visits Moscow to discuss Iraq and North Korea.

Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says he regrets North Korea's withdrawal from the NPT.

Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Losyukov meets the South Korean ambassador to Moscow, Chung Tae-ik, in which he explains the essence of Russia's proposal of a package solution to the problem of North Korea's nuclear programme.

Shigeru Ishiba, director-general of the Japanese Defence Agency, has talks in Moscow with Sergey Ivanov. He says that the settlement of the Korean crisis should be coordinated on a multilateral basis and should involve Russia. Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says Moscow is prepared to cooperate with Tokyo in non-strategic missile defence.

14 January 2003 Russian and Macedonian foreign ministers Igor Ivanov and Ilinka Mitreva meet in Moscow. Co-chairmen of the intergovernmental commission will meet in Skopje in February to discuss the promotion of trade and economic cooperation and possible participation of Russian companies in the forthcoming privatization in Macedonia.

14 January 2003 Pavel Borodin, the state secretary of the Russo-Belarusian union state, presents the draft budget to the 22nd session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union of Belarus and Russia.

14 January 2003 A Georgian delegation led by Transport and Communications Minister Merab Adeishvili arrives in Moscow on commission from Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze. The talks are expected to deal with the resumption of railway communication between Sochi in Russia and Sukhumi in Abkhazia at the end of December.

14 January 2003 The MFA sends an official inquiry to Ashgabat in connection with the announcement of the possible withdrawal of Turkmenistan from the agreement on dual citizenship.

14 January 2003 An executive team on the Collective Security Treaty is created at the CIS military cooperation coordination headquarters. The team will be headed by Lt-Gen Vasiliy Zavgorodnyy, former chief of the military cooperation coordination department at the headquarters. The main task of the team will be to form the joint staff of the Collective Security Treaty member states. The staff is being formed in accordance with a decision taken on 7 October 2002 by the heads of the member states. Another task the team will be assigned will be providing liaison with the rapid deployment collective force acting in Central Asia.

15 January 2003 Igor Ivanov states he supports the IAEA's call on North Korea to continue cooperation with the agency by reactivating monitoring equipment and allowing IAEA inspectors to return.

On Iraq Igor Ivanov says: "Russia proceeds from a belief that a military operation against Baghdad - a unilateral military action not authorized by the UN Security Council - can only exacerbate the already difficult situation in the region, and lead to unforeseeable consequences for world peace and stability, and in particular, do damage to the global fight against international terrorism."

Syrian Vice-President Abd-al-Halim Khaddam has talks with Vladimir Putin in Moscow. Igor Ivanov states: "Now, as you know, at the end of the month, there will be a discussion on the report summing up the two months of work done by the Unmovic and IAEA inspectors. And the UN Security Council should decide how to proceed from there. We think that it is vital to take into account the Unmovic and IAEA report and give the inspectors the chance to carry on their work with the assistance of the Iraqi leadership in order to fully accomplish their mission. There is very serious work to be done in the Security Council. And, of course, the coordination of the efforts of Syria and other countries carries great weight."

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First deputy foreign minister Vyacheslav Trubnikov and Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Mohsen Aminzadeh state that Iraq must abide by UN Security Council Resolution 1441.

15 January 2003 The MFA rejects a CIA report on proliferation presented to US Congress alleging that sensitive technologies are leaking from Russia.

15 January 2003 Russian Aerospace Agency's first deputy general director Valeriy Voskoboynikov says working groups are being set up within the framework of a Russian-Chinese programme for designing, assembling and delivering civil aviation equipment.

15 January 2003 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says Russia will not send its warships to the Persian Gulf. "We have no plans to send to the area of the Persian Gulf any ships of the navy or any other units of the armed forces. I am saying this officially ... on the other hand, we have very serious plans for combat training in all the armed services, including the navy. They include plans to deploy ships in the Indian Ocean. But the Indian Ocean is not the Gulf ... This has nothing to do with any plans or intentions to launch or not to launch any military action. It has nothing to do with Iraq."

Sergey Ivanov says that Russia intends to develop systems of non-strategic antimissile defence and of air and space defence. He says Russia is prepared to cooperate with the USA on missile defence.

15 January 2003 Turkmen President Saparmyrat Nyyazow and Vladimir Putin agree upon the extradition of four Russian citizens arrested on charges of making an attempt on Nyyazow's life in November 2002.

16 January 2003 Foreign minister Igor Ivanov says Russia is ready to discuss with the OSCE the possibility of further cooperation in the political settlement of problems in Chechnya. "In no way is Russia detaching from interaction with the OSCE and other European organizations in furtherance of a political settlement of the problems in Chechnya."

16 January 2003 Igor Ivanov says he is concerned about the attempts of Washington representatives to put pressure on international inspectors in Iraq. "We are concerned about the mounting pressure on the international inspectors and the heads of inspection teams in Iraq on the part of certain circles in Washington ... some reports and official statements call the activities of the international inspectors into question...we think that this policy conflicts with the letter and the spirit of Resolution 1441."

Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Saltanov visits Iraq.

Deputy Energy Minister Ivan Matlashov visits Iraq. Lukoil representatives are expected to meet Iraq's new oil minister to discuss cooperation on the West Qurna-2 oil project.

16 January 2003 The president's special envoy, Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Losyukov, visits China for consultations on the crisis around North Korea's nuclear programme. After talks in China, he is to visit Pyongyang with a Russian initiative - a "package solution of the Korean problem".

Deputy foreign minister Georgiy Mamedov says it is inappropriate for the North Korean nuclear issue to be discussed at the UN Security Council.

16 January 2003 Russian and Pakistani delegations hold talks on strategic stability in Moscow. Deputy Foreign Minister Georgiy Mamedov leads the Russian delegation, and the Pakistani delegation is headed by Mamedov's counterpart Tareq Osman Hayde. Mamedov is concerned that Pakistani nuclear weapons could fall into the hands of Al-Qaeda.

16 January 2003 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov has talks with Indian Defence Minister George Fernandes in Moscow.

16 January 2003 Russian ambassador-at-large Andrey Vdovin has talks with Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmad Mahir al-Sayyid and presidential political adviser Usamah al-Baz in Cairo to discuss the situation in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict zone and the Iraqi problem.

16 January 2003 Armenian President Robert Kocharyan visits Moscow. He discusses economic relations and paying off debts by transferring property to Russia.

16 January 2003 Director of the Russian Federal Border Service Konstantin Totskiy and Chairman of the Belarusian State Committee for Border Troops Alyaksandr Pawlowski sign a protocol on the further development of Belarusian-Russian cooperation and improvement in the protection of the border of the Russian-Belarusian union state in 2003 in Kaliningrad.

16 January 2003 Italian Foreign Minister Franco Frattini visits Moscow.

16 January 2003 Deputy foreign minister Georgiy Mamedov says Russia will actively promote its idea to set up regional theatre missile defence systems as an alternative to the strategic missile defence system currently being developed by the USA.

16 January 2003 The commander-in-chief of the Russian air force, Col-Gen Vladimir Mikhaylov says the Russian air base in Kyrgyzstan will be set up in May 2003.

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16 January 2003 The budget of the Russia-Belarus Union State for 2003, as approved by the union's parliamentary assembly, totals R2.4bn, of which Russia is expected to provide R1.53bn and Belarus R0.82bn.

16 January 2003 Andrey Vdovin, special representative of the Russian foreign minister and ambassador-at-large, says Russia and other members of the "group of four" of international mediators in the Middle East welcome the intention of the Palestinian leadership to continue reforms. He is in Egypt.

16 January 2003 The MFA welcomes reports that US President George W. Bush has authorised the release of funds for Russia this year under the Cooperative Threat Reduction Programme (Nunn-Lugar Programme). About 450 million dollars will be released.

17 January 2003 Sweden decides to open a consulate-general in Kaliningrad.

17 January 2003 The MFA criticizes Britain for permitting the United States to use a British radar station as part of a planned "global missile defence".

17 January 2003 US Ambassador to Russia Alexander Vershbow says that Russia and the USA have issues that complicate their relations. Russia and the USA still have differences on Russia's nuclear cooperation with Iran and over North Korea. He says US-Russian relations are generally positive.

17 January 2003 The Duma defence committee discusses the bill on the Russian-US SORT Treaty and recommend that the Duma reject it.

17 January 2003 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says if war against Iraq takes place, it will be a terrible and fatal mistake. "Russia emphasizes that unilateral military action against Iraq in light of the current circumstances is completely inadmissible. Many countries share this stand with us. I would like to stress that we are not the only ones who adopt such a stand. We, like many others, call for giving the international inspectors the chance to continue their work in Iraq. When they complete their work, we will then study the results and make a collective decision."

The MFA warns against drawing hasty conclusions about the 12 chemical warheads found by UN inspectors in Iraq at the Al-Ukhaydir warehouses.

Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Saltanov meets Iraqi Vice-President Taha Yasin Ramadan and Foreign Minister Naji Sabri Ahmad al-Hadithi in Iraq.

17 January 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Losyukov visits China. He discusses North Korea's nuclear programme. He says Russia and China oppose bringing the North Korea issue to the UN Security Council.

17 January 2003 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov and Israeli Deputy Prime Minister and Construction Minister Natan Sharansky meet in Moscow. On 16 January Sharansky criticized the plan for gradual settlement of the Middle East crisis proposed by the four international co-sponsors of the Middle East peace process (Russia, the US, the UN and the EU).

17 January 2003 Armenian President Robert Kocharyan and Vladimir Putin sign a joint statement on security, Nagorny Karabakh and other issues.

17 January 2003 Yabloko and URF factions in the Duma issue a joint statement on the situation in Turkmenistan and on the position taken by the secretary of the Security Council, Vladimir Rushaylo. They condemn the clampdown on Turkmenistan President Saparmyrat Nyyazow's political opponents and the support given to Nyyazow by Vladimir Rushaylo, during his visit to Turkmenistan in January 2003.

17 January 2003 Russia and Kazakhstan sign a protocol to develop and put a Tokamak experimental thermonuclear complex in operation before 2007.

17 January 2003 Russia and India sign an intergovernmental protocol on military technical cooperation during the visit of Indian Defence Minister George Fernandes to Moscow.

18 January 2003 Aleksandr Losyukov, Deputy Foreign Minister and special representative of the Russian president, arrives in North Korea to discuss "a package solution to the Korean problem". This includes three main provisions. First, it provides for "a nuclear-free status of the Korean peninsula, a strict observance by all the parties concerned of the commitments stipulated by other international agreements, including the 1994 framework agreement". Second, it provides for "a constructive bilateral and multilateral dialogue between the parties concerned, and guarantees of North Korea's security should become one of the results of the dialogue". Third, the document suggests "the resumption of humanitarian and economic programmes, which were implemented in the Korean peninsula".

18 January 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Saltanov visits Jordan.

18 January 2003 The MFA expresses regret over Tbilisi's threat to curtail transportation and support systems to Russian military bases in Georgia.

18 January 2003 Chief of the General Staff Anatoliy Kvashnin says "at present, Russia is facing a much higher level of significant sources of threats, both of an internal and external nature". He discusses Russian security policy at the Academy of Military Sciences.

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Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov also speaks. He says he believes that the use of the armed forces in the fight against terrorist groups is legitimate. He says the war on terrorism has replaced the Cold War as the main security challenge to Russia.

Admiral Viktor Kravchenko, chief of the Russian navy staff, says the Russian navy must be strengthened. He addresses the Academy of Military Sciences.

19 January 2003 Vladimir Putin visits Belarus.

19 January 2003 Yuriy Vishnevskiy, the head of Gosatomnadzor, visits India. Russia and India have signed a nuclear safety agreement in Mumbai (former Bombay) in the Indian state of Maharashtra.

20 January 2003 Russian Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Aleksey Kudrin and Hungarian Finance Minister Csaba Laszlo sign a protocol on final settlement of the former USSR debt to Hungary, which amounted to 467m dollars. The size of the debt was calculated as of 1 January 2003, and it includes interest charged for 2002.

20 January 2003 Aleksandr Losyukov, the Russian Federation president's special envoy, visits North Korea for talks with Kim Jong-il.

20 January 2003 Georgiy Mamedov, deputy foreign minister, and Alexander Vershbow, the US ambassador in Moscow, confirm that Moscow and Washington are prepared to work together to find a solution for the Iraqi and North Korean issues.

20 January 2003 Pacific Fleet Commander Viktor Fedorov officially denies information on the transfer of Russian military ships to the Persian Gulf zone.

20 January 2003 Igor Ivanov attends a UN Security Council session. He says Russia believes it is very important to refrain from any unilateral moves which could "endanger the unity of the antiterrorist coalition".

Igor Ivanov says the UN Security Council must further intensify its active involvement in addressing the tasks of fighting terrorism. He says Russia regards as inadmissible any "double standards" in approach of terrorism. "An attitude to terrorists should be the same everywhere - be it in the United States, the Middle East, Europe or Chechnya."

MFA spokesman Aleksandr Yakovenko states that Russia "actively comes out in favour of establishing, under UN auspices, a global system to counteract terrorism on the solid foundation of international law". In so doing, Yakovenko pointed out Russia's resolute stand that all countries must fully abide by UN Security Council Resolution 1373. Yakovenko believes that the use of force without UN sanction may aggravate the terrorist threat still further and lead only to destabilisation at regional and global levels.

21 January 2003 Chechen head of administration Akhmad Kadyrov leaves for the Middle East and North Africa on an official visit. Kadyrov will lead a Chechen delegation, which will include government members and muftis of the North Caucasus, and visit Libya and Jordan for talks with Colonel Mu'ammarr Bin-Muhammad Qadhafi and King Abdallah II Bin-Husayn.

21 January 2003 Lord Judd, chief of the political commission of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) and co-chairman of the Duma-PACE working group calls Chechnya's draft constitution an interesting and useful document.

21 January 2003 Igor Ivanov says the scope for resolving the Iraq problem by diplomatic means has not yet been exhausted. Ivanov says Russia will not support unilateral use of force against Iraq. "If this happens not only will it complicate the situation in the region, it will deal a palpable blow to the unity of the antiterrorist coalition ... force need only be resorted to when all the possibilities have been exhausted."

Ivanov visits the Richard Nixon Centre and attends a meeting of the US-Russia Interaction Commission. He stresses the importance of "building up mutual understanding, broadening the sphere of similar interests, and strengthening the principles of partnership between Russia and the United States on the basis of summit agreements".

21 January 2003 Deputy foreign minister Georgiy Mamedov says the SORT Treaty between Russia and the United States may be ratified in spring. Chairman of the Duma International Affairs Committee Dmitriy Rogozin says that "the deputies of the State Duma will see to the synchronic ratification of the Russian-American Treaty ... it will never happen again that we ratify a document and the Americans stumble in the ratification, the same as it happened to START-2."

21 January 2003 Secretary of the Security Council Vladimir Rushaylo meets Georgian parliament speaker Nino Burjanadze. He calls for a compromise between Georgia and its breakaway Abkhazia region but insists that Abkhazia remain part of Georgia.

21 January 2003 Bulgarian President Georgi Purvanov visits Moscow for talks with Vladimir Putin.

21 January 2003 Volker Ruhe, chairman of the German Bundestag's International Affairs Committee, meets Andrey Nikolayev, chairman of the Duma Defence Committee. He says military contacts between Russia and NATO members have much decreased over the past few years. The mid-1990s saw on average 50 to 60 German-Russian military cooperation events annually, there were only 30 in 2002, and as few as 19 are planned for the current year.

21 January 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Saltanov visits Lebanon.

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22 January 2003 Vladimir Putin attends a meeting of the State Council, which discusses the regions' role in foreign policy. A new body, the Council of the Heads of Constituent Parts of the Federation, is to be set up under the MFA. Putin says a working group is, together with the foreign minister, working towards the creation of a good mechanism which would help regional leaders to develop, together with the heads of federal departments, key issues in Russia's foreign policy and foreign economic activity.

22 January 2003 The Duma adopts a statement on Iraq. It appeals to Vladimir Putin "to immediately adopt every possible measure, including in the framework of the UN Security Council, to prevent US military actions against Iraq".

22 January 2003 Vladimir Putin believes that the problem of border demarcation with China will be settled in the immediate future. He says some compromises are necessary.

The governor of Khabarovsk Territory, Viktor Ishayev, expresses concern at the State Council over China's "active expansion" into Russia. Putin rejects these concerns.

22 January 2003 Duma speaker Gennady Seleznev warns the Georgian leadership against irresponsible decisions concerning Russian peacekeepers currently stationed in Abkhazia. He meets Nino Burjanadze, Georgian parliament speaker, in Moscow. He says Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze's statement on the intention not to extend the Russian peacekeepers' mandate in Abkhazia came as "somewhat surprising".

22 January 2003 Vladimir Putin says that the CIS is, in effect, a free-trade zone, as Russia has signed bilateral agreements with all the CIS countries except Ukraine. Putin says that Russia will continue to negotiate with Ukraine so that a mutually beneficial arrangement is reached.

The MFA says Russian-Ukrainian talks on demarcating their ground border, which exceeds 3,100 km, have been completed successfully. The Russian Federal Border Guard Service states that 12 government commissions for demarcating the border between Russia and neighbouring states have been set up and are currently working. After the Soviet Union fell apart Russia's border increased by 22,000 km of new sections. Of the 7,600 km of the Russian-Kazakh border only 5,500 km have been defined. Only 80% of the Russian state border with Azerbaijan and Georgia has been demarcated.

23 January 2003 Ingush President Murat Zyazikov meets Lord Judd, the co-chairman of the PACE-Duma working group and the PACE rapporteur on Chechnya. They discuss the Chechen refugee problem.

23 January 2003 US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage says the US government is preparing to classify Chechen separatist organizations as terrorist groups.

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23 January 2003 The Russian and US presidents, Vladimir Putin and George Bush, discuss North Korea and Iraq.

Vladimir Putin says Russia "does not reject the possibility of joint work with the USA to set up a system of antimissile defence".

Igor Ivanov says Russia welcomes direct US-North Korean talks and will work to assist this process.

23 January 2003 First Deputy Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Trubnikov says that Russia is urging Iraq to intensify cooperation with the UN inspectors. He speaks after a meeting of the ninth meeting of the Russian-American working group on the anti-terror struggle. US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage attends this meeting in Moscow.

23 January 2003 First Deputy Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Trubnikov says that Russia and the United States held similar views on terrorism and had common intentions to combat it on an international scale. He notes that Russia has interaction with other countries on terrorism; Russia and China had held meetings within such a working group. Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Anatoliy Safonov has represented Russia at the first meeting of the Russian-Pakistani working group. Trubnikov notes that he had recently held consultations on counter-terrorism and regional security with Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Mohsen Aminzadeh.

23 January 2003 Igor Ivanov visits Greece. He says in the event of the use of force against Iraq, Russia will "actively try to bring about an end to such a use of force and the return of the process leading to a political settlement."

23 January 2003 President Vladimir Putin holds a working meeting with Gazprom chief Aleksey Miller and UES chairman Anatoliy Chubays. He calls for them to maintain energy supplies to Georgia and Armenia.

23 January 2003 Khabarovsk Territory governor Viktor Ishayev briefs Vladimir Putin on the results of Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's recent visit to the region.

24 January 2003 Lord Judd, PACE rapporteur on Chechnya, says that Chechen separatist representatives should be involved in a peaceful settlement in Chechnya. He says he will ask Russia to reconsider the date for a referendum on the Chechen constitution. This request will be included in his report on the situation in Chechnya. The constitutional referendum is scheduled for 23 March.

Igor Ivanov says Moscow is ready to cooperate with international organizations, including the United Nations and the OSCE, in attaining a political settlement in Chechnya.

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The Duma calls on world parliaments to cooperate in the extradition of terrorists. The Duma criticises the Danish authorities' decision to refuse to extradite to Russia a Chechen gang leader, Akhmad Zakayev, who is wanted by Interpol.

24 January 2003 Aleksandr Losyukov, special representative of the Russian president and deputy foreign minister, states that Moscow considers that submitting the North Korean problem for discussion to the UN Security Council would be premature. He says the North Korean leadership has assured Russia that it is not engaged in the production of nuclear weapons.

24 January 2003 Igor Ivanov says Russia "is in favour of strict implementation by everyone of all the UN Security Council resolutions on Iraq, primarily Resolution No 1441". "World communities should have a clear answer to the question of whether Iraq has weapons of mass destruction," he stressed. "If it does, then they should be destroyed. If not, we should move on to lifting sanctions." He says that international inspectors "must continue to work in Iraq and they must receive assistance from the world community ... at present there are no grounds to submit the issue of using force in relation to Iraq to a UN Security Council sitting...at present we see no serious arguments to submit the issue of using force in relation to Iraq to the UN Security Council ... we will only be able to resolve this problem by political means," he said. "If events develop this way, we can strengthen international cooperation, including the campaign against terrorism."

24 January 2003 Atomic Energy Minister Aleksandr Rumyantsev welcomes what he describes as a "favourable shift" in the USA's attitude to the nuclear power plant construction project Russia is implementing at Bushehr, in Iran. Rumyantsev was speaking in the wake of a statement by a senior US administration official to the effect the United States would not object to the construction of one nuclear power reactor in Iran, but not more.

24 January 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Georgiy Mamedov and US Assistant Secretary of State Elizabeth Jones discuss Iraq and the prospects for settlement on the Korean peninsula. Mamedov and Jones also discuss some current issues related to bilateral relations, including preparations for a Russian-US summit in St Petersburg.

Duma speaker Gennadiy Seleznev criticises US policy towards Iraq.

24 January 2003 Chairman of the Duma Defence Committee Andrey Nikolayev and Chairman of the Georgian Committee on Defence and Security Irakli Batiashvili have talks on Russo-Georgian military cooperation.

25 January 2003 Vladimir Putin has a telephone conversation with South Korean President Kim Dae-jung.

25 January 2003 Igor Ivanov is interviewed on TV on Russian foreign policy. He discusses international terrorism.

Dr Mark A Smith

26 January 2003 The MFA expresses concern over Israeli raids in Gaza and the surrounding area.

26 January 2003 Special representative of the Russian Foreign Ministry in the Middle East Andrey Vdovin visits Syria.

26 January 2003 First Deputy Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Trubnikov has talks in Paris with the French Foreign Ministry's secretary-general, Hubert Colin de Verdiere. The MFA says a number of key issues on the international agenda had been discussed at the consultations, including developments in Afghanistan, the Iraq problem, the situation on the Korean peninsula and in the CIS. The French side also raised the problems of Africa in the context of its well-known initiatives in the framework of the G8.

27 January 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov says Russia believes that "inspections in Iraq should continue in accordance with earlier UN Security Council decisions". He is commenting on the report submitted to the UN Security Council in New York today by head of Unmovic Hans Blix. He says "there is no need at present to pass new resolutions on Iraq".

Igor Ivanov is interviewed on Al-Jazeera TV. He says only UN inspectors can discover the truth about Iraqi weaponry and warns again of the dangers of unilateral military action against Iraq without the backing of the UN. Ivanov says he did not think the Iraqi situation warranted "extreme measures", and that unilateral military action against Iraq "could strike a serious blow against the unity of the international community, and the international terrorist coalition". He made it clear that he saw no prospect of the "Security Council passing a decision that would sanction the use of force".

Igor Ivanov is interviewed on NBC TV. He says there are no grounds for using force against Iraq.

Igor Ivanov is interviewed in *Itogi* magazine. He discusses Russo-Iraqi economic ties, and US NMD plans.

Sergey Lavrov, Russia's permanent envoy at the UN, is interviewed on Russian TV. He says reports by UN weapons inspectors provide no grounds for supporting a military operation against Iraq. He tells viewers that the UN inspectors had not reported any evidence that Iraq was engaged in the production of weapons of mass destruction.

MFA spokesman Aleksandr Yakovenko says that international inspections in Iraq had shown no departures from UN decisions and need to go on, and that Baghdad had given the inspectors unlimited access to anything they wished to see.

Vladimir Putin speaks by telephone to British Prime Minister Tony Blair of the need for international inspectors to continue their work in Iraq in line with a UN Security Council decision.

The Russian and German foreign ministers, Igor Ivanov and Joschka Fisher, discuss the situation relating to Iraq in a telephone conversation.

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27 January 2003 The Russian delegation to PACE rejects draft recommendations by Lord Judd, who prepared his recommendations after visiting Chechnya as co-chairman of a joint PACE-Duma working group on Chechnya. Dmitriy Rogozin, the other co-chairman of the group calls for Judd's replacement. He says: "We intend to insist on relevant amendments to the draft recommendations, and if they are not supported by the political commission and the assembly as a whole, we will put forward a motion for the replacement of the chief rapporteur (Lord Judd)." Rogozin objects to Judd's recommendation that the Chechen constitutional referendum be postponed.

27 January 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Razov informs EU representatives about the difficulties that arose at Russian-Lithuanian consultations regarding transit to and from Kaliningrad Region. He draws attention to Lithuania's decision to change the national border control regime starting on 1 February, which had been made unilaterally and without prior discussion with Russia. He says the decision "may deny thousands of Russian citizens the use of railway transport to and from Kaliningrad Region and, thus, contradict the agreements reached at the recent Russia-EU summit."

28 January 2003 Igor Ivanov has said he expects that the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) will provide expert support in monitoring the referendum on the Chechen constitution and government elections scheduled for 23 March.

Aide to the Russian president Sergey Yastrzhembskiy says Russia expects the US administration to place the Chechen rebels on the list of international terrorist organizations.

28 January 2003 Vladimir Putin visits Ukraine. Ten Russo-Ukrainian documents are signed. They include cooperation in the field of goods exchange, education and health care. A treaty on delimiting the state border has also been signed.

On Iraq he says: "If Iraq starts hindering the inspectors, Russia may change its position and agree with the USA on making other, tougher decisions at the UN Security Council."

28 January 2003 Igor Ivanov says the United Nations will crack down on Iraq if Baghdad raises obstacles to international inspectors looking for weapons of mass destruction. "This is not now on the agenda. But in case of flagrant violations by Iraq of Resolution 1441 of the UN Security Council, which demands that Baghdad provide all necessary assistance to the international inspectors, all provisions of this resolution will be enforced, including the possibility of additional steps being taken to have Iraq fulfil the requirements of this document on the full scale."

Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov says Russia stands for further international inspections in Iraq in compliance with UN Security Council resolutions. He says the inspections have yielded positive results.

Igor Ivanov criticizes statements made by some Iraqi officials that Iraq may attack neighbouring countries, in particular Kuwait, if a military operation against Baghdad is launched.

28 January 2003 Igor Ivanov calls for an immediate meeting of the four international mediators of the Middle East settlement - Russia, the United States, the European Union and the United Nations. He has talks in Moscow with Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference Abdelouahed Belkeziz.

29 January 2003 Sergey Lavrov, Russia's permanent representative to the UN, states that Russia considers that there is no reason to realize a military scenario in relation to Iraq, Lavrov says Russia has offered its reconnaissance aircraft to be used during the international inspections in Iraq.

Deputy Foreign Minister Georgiy Mamedov tells the US ambassador in Moscow, Alexander Vershbow, that from the Russian point of view there are no objective prerequisites at the moment for the use of military force in Iraq.

Igor Ivanov says the MFA has a plan for evacuating Russian citizens from Iraq. Some 700 Russian are currently working in Iraq.

29 January 2003 MFA spokesman Aleksandr Yakovenko says Russia and the USA are "partners in the fight against international terrorism". "We do not always view specific sources of threat in the same way, but we believe that close Russian-US cooperation is absolutely necessary to resolve common problems of ensuring security and stability in the world." He is commenting on US President George W Bush's speech to Congress.

29 January 2003 Vladimir Putin says Russia is ready to pull out peacekeepers from the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict zone if the Georgian side wishes it.

29 January 2003 Yukos Chairman Mikhail Khodorkovskiy says Russia cannot meet conditions for a short-term reduction in oil supplies, proposed by OPEC.

29 January 2003 Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Aleksey Kudrin currently sees no need for foreign borrowing, although Russia may borrow up to 1.25bn dollars in 2003, which is currently not necessary. In 2004 and 2005 Russia's foreign borrowing is planned tentatively at 3bn dollars and 4bn dollars.

30 January 2003 Russian presidential aide Sergey Yastrzhembskiy says he is convinced that Russia's interaction with the Council of Europe on the problem of Chechnya will develop positively after Lord Judd's resignation from his post as rapporteur on Chechnya at the PACE and as co-chairman of the PACE-Duma working group.

30 January 2003 Igor Ivanov visits Bulgaria. Igor Ivanov says that NATO widening is unlikely to give greater security to its participants. "I have very big doubts the alliance will successfully handle such problems as terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and drug trafficking ... NATO must be retargeted to address the issues of today so as to search jointly for ways of resisting new global threats and challenges. This is precisely the reason why Russia and NATO formed a joint council that makes decisions on an equitable basis. If the alliance continues to be reformed along the same lines, more areas of cooperation will open up. The mechanical expansion of NATO does not meet the security interests of either the alliance itself or Russia."

30 January 2003 Presidential aide Sergey Yastrzhembskiy visits the USA. He says that Moscow has forwarded to the US administration materials which should help it to put three Chechen groups on the black list of foreign terrorist organizations. The groups are the so-called Basayev's battalion of shahids, the Congress of Peoples of Ichkeria and Dagestan and the Supreme Military Mejlis-ul-Shura - United Force of Caucasian Mojahedin. He has talks with US National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice.

Sergey Yastrzhembskiy says that the USA administration allows a possibility of creating within 5-8 years joint armed forces of NATO and Russia. He says this is the opinion of Daniel Fried, director of the US National Security Council's Europe and Eurasia department.

30 January 2003 Russian-Norwegian talks take place in Moscow on nuclear safety in Russia's northwest.

30 January 2003 Vladimir Putin calls for more vigorous political and diplomatic efforts to resolve the Iraq problem. "Recent weeks and days, unfortunately, give us reason for concern - tension relating to Iraq is not decreasing, and the situation that is taking shape in the Middle East is a difficult one."

Igor Ivanov says that Russia "will use all political and diplomatic methods of work at its disposal in order to avoid situations where it would be a matter of using its right of veto" in the UN Security Council in resolving the problem of Iraq. "Together with this, if anybody tries within the framework of the UN Security Council to resolve questions that go beyond the bounds of existing resolutions on Iraq, for example, linked with interference in the internal affairs of that country, or problems of another geopolitical nature, then here, evidently, it will be difficult to reach agreement." He stresses that "certain countries are trying to use the resolving of the problem of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq as a pretext for regime change in that country ... this runs counter to existing UN Security Council resolutions on Iraq."

Igor Ivanov says that Moscow has no information on links between Iraq and Al-Qaeda.

30 January 2003 The MFA says it hopes that the new Israeli government will take steps to resume talks with Palestine and seek more extensive relations with Russia.

30 January 2003 The chairman of the Duma committee on international affairs, Dmitriy Rogozin, says Russia "has long been calling for the USA to present information backing up their allegations against Iraq". He says: "Let the USA tell us what they actually have ... of course we will listen to what the Americans want to tell us, but so far all they have done is complain about the inspectors...I am concerned that on this occasion once again we will just have their word for it. It is extremely doubtful that the USA has information which the inspectors do not."

Deputy chairman of the Duma international affairs committee Konstantin Kosachev says that Russia is not defending Saddam, "but the modern world order that has existed throughout the post-war period and is based on the fairly simple tenet that the world community's only body authorized to take decisions to use force, to use military force in international relations, was, is and will evidently remain the United Nations Organization. Time after time the United States of America - it happened in Yugoslavia, it happened in Afghanistan and now it's happening over Iraq - is attempting to force an entirely different model on the world, which presupposes a dramatic increase in the role of individual decisions. That is, the model the US is putting forward means decisions are taken at the national level, by the United States for example, as to who's good and who's bad, who's a pariah and who isn't."

30 January 2003 Vladimir Putin says Russia favours the development of political dialogue with the Vatican.

31 January 2003 The president of the Russian Oil and Gas Producers' Union, Yuriy Shafranik, says that to protect its interests in Iraq Russia should cooperate more closely with Western countries to launch joint economic projects.

31 January 2003 Justice Minister Yuriy Chayka welcomes the decision by the British Home Secretary to start proceedings to have Chechen envoy Akhmed Zakayev extradited.

The head of the Federal Assembly delegation to PACE, Dmitriy Rogozin, officially announces that he is resigning as co-chairman of the PACE-State Duma working group on Chechnya.

MFA spokesman Aleksandr Yakovenko says Russia is ready to work with OSCE on the issue of Chechnya, in spite of the fact that the OSCE mission in Chechnya has closed.

31 January 2003 The All Russian Public Opinion Centre conducts a poll on military action against Iraq. 52% oppose US/British plans to launch such an operation, and only 3% say they support it. However, 20% of respondents said they did not have enough information about the US and British plans. 17% neither praised nor condemned such an operation, and 8% were undecided. When asked what Russia should do if the USA launches a military action in Iraq, 38% said Moscow should not take part in it but remain an ally of the USA in the antiterrorist coalition. 24% of respondents believe Russia should condemn US actions and provide diplomatic assistance to Iraq. 1% said Russia should take part in such an operation and 8% said Russia should back US actions but not take part in the

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operation. 6% of respondents suggest that military assistance (weapons, etc.) should be provided to Iraq.

31 January 2003 Igor Ivanov and LUKoil President Vagit Alekperov discuss the company's foreign projects at a meeting in Moscow.

31 January 2003 The MFA says Russia will promote adequate implementation of Resolution 1462. The unilateral adoption of the resolution at the UN Security Council extended the mandate of the UN observer mission in Georgia till 31 July 2003.

February

1 February 2003 Vladimir Putin and Syrian President Bashar al-Asad, speak by telephone. They discuss the results of Syrian Vice-President Abd-al-Halim Khaddam's visit to Russia in mid-January.

1 February 2003 MFA spokesman Aleksandr Yakovenko says Russia and the international community are ready to help Washington and Pyongyang secure an effective dialogue.

1 February 2003 Lithuania introduces restrictions on transit travel via its territory between Russia and Kaliningrad.

1 February 2003 Abkhaz Prime Minister Gennadiy Gagulia visits Moscow. He has talks with presidential special envoy for a Georgia-Abkhazia settlement, First Deputy Foreign Minister Valeriy Loshchinin.

1 February 2003 Vladimir Putin rings US President George Bush and expresses deep sympathy in connection with the death of the crew of the Columbia space shuttle.

3 February 2003 Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi visits Moscow. He believes Russia must become an active member of the EU and that he must raise the question of accelerating these relations when Italy becomes European Union president in the second half of 2003. This necessitates the establishment of an EU-Russia permanent consultative agency and an EU-Russia permanent council.

3 February 2003 LUKoil vice-president Leonid Fedun says the West Qurna-2 field will be actively developed after the UN lifts sanctions against Iraq.

Vladimir Putin says he believes that a new UN resolution on Iraq may be needed if UN inspectors are not satisfied with the possibilities of working in Iraq provided to them. "We'll think about it. There is no such need at the moment, but I don't rule

it out." He also says: "What is the problem? Does Iraq have weapons of mass destruction or not? That is the question that has to be answered. We have Resolution 1441. Everyone has agreed that it is satisfactory. The inspectors are working. They are working. Have they found anything? No they haven't found anything yet. The inspectors must tell us what else they need from Iraq. What else must be demanded of Iraq to make their work more effective? Let them tell us that. We will draw up demands on Iraq and put them to Iraq. Of course if these demands make good sense. After that we will see how the work is going. All this must be assessed again at the UN Security Council and of course force must only be used in the most extreme event."

Vladimir Putin and British Prime Minister Tony Blair discuss by telephone ways to settle the Iraqi crisis.

Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov is convinced that UN inspections in Iraq should continue. "We do not believe that the questions Unmovic has for Iraq can be deemed substantial violations of UN Security Council Resolution 1441, and therefore as grounds for starting a military operation."

3 February 2003 Atomic Energy Minister Aleksandr Rumyantsev says Russia does not violate international obligations in cooperating with Iran and everything is under the control of the IAEA.

Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov meets Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi in Tehran. Kharrazi asks Russia to show more sensitivity towards the US unilateralism given different challenges facing Central Asia, the Caucasus and the Persian Gulf.

3 February 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Georgiy Mamedov says the shortest way to a "package settlement" in North Korea is to hold a direct dialogue between Washington and Pyongyang with the participation of the whole international community.

3 February 2003 Rosoboroneksport General-Director Andrey Belyaninov is interviewed in *Vedomosti*. He says equipment sales rose to 4bn dollars last year while total revenues reached 4.3bn dollars. In 2001, Rosoboroneksport exported equipment worth 3.2bn dollars while its revenues stood at 4.2bn. Belyaninov also said Rosoboroneksport plans to increase naval and air defence equipment exports in 2003. Currently, 75% of Rosoboroneksport's sales are military aircraft, while sales of weapons and equipment for land forces constitute about 15% and naval and air defence equipment exports account for 6% and 4% of exports respectively. Small contracts - those worth less than 50m dollars - accounted for 95% of all Rosoboroneksport's contracts in 2002.

3 February 2003 An official of the Russian Aerospace Agency (Rosaviakosmos), Vyacheslav Mikhaylichenko, says Russia and the US have begun consultations on the future of the International Space Station.

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3 February 2003 OSCE chairman, Dutch Foreign Minister Jakob de Hoop Scheffer, arrives in Moscow.

3 February 2003 Russian Ambassador to Ukraine Viktor Chernomyrdin is interviewed in *Novaya Gazeta*.

4 February 2003 The Russian Prosecutor-General's Office is initiating a procedure to qualify individual organizations entered on the Federal Security Service (FSB) black list as terrorist organizations. The list comprises 15 organizations operating in Russia and abroad, including the Supreme Military Majlis Shura of the Joint Mojahedin Forces of the Caucasus, led by Shamil Basayev, and Al-Qaeda, led by Usamah bin Laden. Other organizations on the list include: the Congress of the Peoples of Ichkeria and Dagestan (Chechnya), led by Basayev and Movladi Udugov; Isbat al-Ansar (Lebanon); Jihad (Egypt); Al-Jama'ah al Islamiyah (Egypt); the Muslim Brotherhood (an international organization); the Islamic Liberation Party (an international organization); Lashkar-i-Toiba (Pakistan); the Taleban movement (Afghanistan); the Islamic Party of Turkestan (formerly the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan); the Social Reform Society (Kuwait); the Islamic Heritage Revival Society (Kuwait), and Al-Haramayn (the Two Holy Sites of Mecca, Saudi Arabia.)

4 February 2003 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov says OSCE representatives will go to Chechnya on the eve of the upcoming Chechen constitutional referendum.

The chairman of the Duma's international affairs committee, Dmitriy Rogozin, believes that PACE should send observers to the referendum on the Chechen constitution set for 23 March.

4 February 2003 Igor Ivanov criticizes the United States for some of its unilateral steps. Igor Ivanov Russia says he "favours the demilitarization of space and opposes the deployment of weapons in space". He criticises the USA's withdrawal from the ABM treaty.

4 February 2003 Vladimir Putin and US President George Bush confer by telephone. They discuss Iraq.

4 February 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Saltanov and the Chinese ambassador to Russia, Zhang Deguang, say Russia and China believe that United Nations inspectors should be given enough time to perform their mission in Iraq. They note the identity of the approaches of Russia and China for a settlement of the Iraq problem by political-diplomatic means on the basis of complete implementation of the appropriate decisions of the United Nations Security Council, above all Resolution 1441.

4 February 2003 The MFA says it opposes an increased US military presence on the Korean peninsula. It calls for a direct dialogue between North Korea and the USA.

4 February 2003 Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf arrives in Moscow.

4 February 2003 The Russian MOD denies Georgia's accusations that Russia has violated the CFE Treaty.

4 February 2003 Duma deputy and member of the state commission for the disposal of chemical weapons Nikolay Bezborodov says about 40,000 tonnes of warfare chemicals are stored in Russia, and these are to be destroyed by the year 2012.

5 February 2003 Ingush President Murat Zyazikov gives a news conference in Magas on his visit to PACE in Strasbourg.

5 February 2003 Igor Ivanov attends the UN Security Council session where US Secretary of State Colin Powell presents evidence on Iraq's non-compliance with UN Security Council Resolution 1441.

Yuriy Shafranik, the chairman of the Committee for Scientific, Cultural and Business Cooperation with Iraq, returns from a visit to Iraq. He says Russia must oppose any war against Iraq.

The director-general of the Russian Munitions Agency, Zinoviy Pak, says he believes that Iraq has no modern chemical weapons.

Atomic Energy Minister Aleksandr Rumyantsev is interviewed in *Vremya Novostey*. He says he does not rule out cooperation in the nuclear sphere with Iraq in the future if sanctions are dropped. He casts doubt on whether North Korea can manufacture nuclear weapons as it lacks sufficient uranium.

5 February 2003 MFA welcomes the creation of the union of Serbia and Montenegro.

5 February 2003 Vladimir Putin meets Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov and commander in chief of the navy Vladimir Kuroyedov. The Russian defence minister reports to the president on preparations for large-scale exercises in the Pacific Ocean in August.

6 February 2003 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov says that Russia expects Chechen rebel groups to be put on the US list of terrorist organizations.

6 February 2003 Igor Ivanov speaks at a meeting of the Russian-Polish committee for strategic cooperation. He discusses Kaliningrad.

6 February 2003 Vladimir Putin and French President Jacques Chirac have a telephone conversation. They discuss Iraq.

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Igor Ivanov says the report delivered by Colin Powell, US Secretary of State, at the UN Security Council on Iraqi on-compliance does not provide a reason for Russia changing its stance on Iraq.

Chairman of the Duma international affairs committee Dmitriy Rogozin expresses scepticism about Colin Powell's report to the UN on Iraq.

Security Council secretary Vladimir Rushaylo states that there are still political and diplomatic means for settling the Iraqi conflict.

6 February 2003 The MFA welcomes the US Senate's Foreign Relations Committee's approval of the Treaty on Strategic Offensive Reductions signed by Russian and US Presidents Vladimir Putin and George Bush in May 2002.

6 February 2003 Trade turnover between Russia and Germany has dropped by 0.4% to 24.7bn euros from 2001 to 2002. Germany accounts for about 14% of Russia's foreign trade turnover.

7 February 2003 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says Russia will send a group of about 10 warships to the Indian Ocean in 2003.

Ivanov says he cannot rule out that the US and its allies may launch a military campaign against Iraq. "The problem of Iraq consists of one simple question: the international inspectors should clearly say whether they are satisfied with the course of their work in Iraq, or if they are lacking something, and clearly inform the UN Security Council." He says that "it is too early to make decisions or consider new resolutions." He says he doubts that Iraq could hide WMD projects.

Igor Ivanov makes a report on the Iraqi situation at the Duma. He says Iraq must actively cooperate with UN inspectors. He says if a unilateral military campaign is launched against Iraq, this will undermine the UN and split the anti-terrorist coalition.

Igor Ivanov says Moscow sees no grounds at present for the adoption of a new UN Security Council resolution sanctioning the use of force against Iraq.

Duma chairman Gennady Seleznev says that US Secretary of State Colin Powell did not provide any evidence that Iraq has weapons of mass destruction to the UN Security Council on 5 February.

The chairman of the Duma Committee for International Affairs, Dmitriy Rogozin says Russia should take into consideration its economic interests when taking political decisions, including the one on Iraq. "It is important to understand whether the economic interests of Russia will vanish or remain if the Baghdad regime changes through a military intervention ... Russia and the international community must realize to what extent the military operation against Iraq will tell on the future of the United Nations. It is possible that a permanent member of the UN Security Council will decide to start the action without authorization by the council, which has never happened before."

Dr Mark A Smith

7 February 2003 Andrey Nikolayev, chairman of the Defence Committee in the Duma, says the coalition of countries that have declared a global fight against terrorism still lacks an antiterrorist strategy. "The main reason is that the antiterrorist coalition, bringing together over 100 countries, is acting blindly because it still relies on the power and strength of a single country."

7 February 2003 Moldovan President Vladimir Voronin visits Moscow for talks with Vladimir Putin.

7 February 2003 Finnish foreign minister Erkki Tuomioja arrives in Moscow for talks with Igor Ivanov.

7 February 2003 Polish Foreign Minister Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz arrives in Moscow for talks with Mikhail Kasyanov.

7 February 2003 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov is interviewed in *La Stampa*.

7 February 2003 Maksim Medvedkov, Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Trade says Russia has had talks with the EU on trade issues in Moscow.

8 February 2003 A delegation of the Russian company Zarubezhneft leaves for Syria to sign a deal for creating a firm AMRIT that will be involved in "geophysical, drilling and other service work forming part of the complete production cycle of the petroleum sector".

8 February 2003 Georgian Minister for Special Assignments Malkhaz Kakabadze and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Merab Antadze say Georgian-Russian talks on the renewal of a mandate for the Russian peacekeeping forces deployed in the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict have proved to be ineffective. MFA spokesman Aleksandr Yakovenko says Georgia has an interest in prolonging the mandate of CIS peacekeepers.

Chairman of the Georgian State Border Guard Department Valeri Chkheidze says the Georgian State Border Guard Department has recently received tactical information that an armed group headed by Chechen field commander, Ruslan Gelayev, is preparing to move to Georgia across the Chechnya section of the Georgian-Russian border. The Russian side has been informed.

8 February 2003 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov calls for an end to "double standards" in the fight against terrorism. He expresses concern at extreme Islamic groups operating in Central Asia and the security of nuclear weapons in nuclear club countries. He warns of the resurgence of the Taleban in Afghanistan, and expresses confidence in Unmovic.

8 February 2003 Sergey Ivanov and NATO Secretary-General George Robertson sign a framework document on rescuing submarine crews.

9 February 2003 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says that the crisis on the Korean peninsula could overshadow the situation surrounding Iraq.

Ivanov says Russia could join the Franco-German initiative to reinforce the group of inspectors in Iraq.

Ivanov believes that a new UN Security Council resolution on Iraq could be adopted only on the basis of the report of the international inspectors working in the country. "I believe there is no need for this resolution at least until 14 February ... the present resolution of the UN Security Council No 1441 enables the inspectors to work actively in Iraq ... I have no doubt that if it comes to a new resolution, it should only proceed from the inspectors' report."

He says that Moscow is prepared to support the idea of strengthening international inspectors' groups in Iraq. "We have high-skilled experts in biological, chemical and nuclear weapons ... in addition, Russia has technical means, including intelligence planes, and we are ready to place them at the disposal of the UN to strengthen the inspectors' force."

"Russia considers conclusions made by the international inspectors to be the only competent opinion".

Sergey Ivanov says he cannot see any improvements in the situation in Georgia's Pankisi Gorge. "I want everyone to understand that not everything can be reduced to the Pankisi Gorge problem ... there are areas of Georgia where there are terrorist bases from which repeated attempts have been made to raid Russian territory and where there are laboratories for the makeshift production of toxins, including for subsequent use in the West". He says Russia has no plans to intervene in the Pankisi Gorge.

Ivanov says that before the Duma ratifies the CFE Treaty the Baltic republics should assume all the commitments stipulated by that document.

9 February 2003 First Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov say he sees no necessity in the adoption by the UN Security Council of a new resolution on Iraq." He says "the adoption of a new resolution is possible," but everything will depend on "what the resolution contains". Iraq "should take additional steps to improve cooperation with the international community and clear up the questions still unsettled."

9 February 2003 Vladimir Putin says he shares French and German views on Iraq, namely that more inspectors should be sent. "I think that all those who are following the developments with regard to Iraq see that, basically, the positions of the Russian Federation, France and Germany coincide, in fact. Our foreign ministries and our representatives at the Security Council are working in close contact and coordinating their actions. The People's Republic of China holds the similar position. According to our information, the majority of UN Security Council members share these views, more or less."

Dr Mark A Smith

Vladimir Putin is interviewed by France-3 television. He says:

“The main thing is that France and Russia have identical approaches to the building of a future international security architecture. We believe here, in Russia, just as French President Jacques Chirac believes, that the future international security architecture must be based on a multi-polar world. This is the main thing that unites us.

I am absolutely confident that the world will be predictable and stable only if it is multi-polar. But this does not mean that our views coincide on all problems and on all questions. We can differ on the tactics of achieving the ends that we think we have in common. These differences can sometimes be quite considerable. Take for example our approaches to the settlement of the situation in Yugoslavia.

We continue to believe even now that our position was more balanced because the military action - and this is my deep conviction - failed to bring about a definitive settlement. But the quality of relations between Russia and France enabled us, despite these differences in our approaches, to muster our common potential to work out a joint solution to the problems of postwar settlement. And we arrived - together with France, together with the other UN Security Council members - at a common solution.”

10 February 2003 Deputy Finance Minister Sergey Kolotukhin says Russia will not initiate negotiations on rescheduling its debt to the Paris Club. It continues to pay and service the debt.

10 February 2003 The State Customs Committee say Russia's trade turnover with foreign countries in 2002 was 126bn dollars, an increase of 8.5% from 2001. Exports to these countries amounted to 90.2bn dollars (5.6% up), and imports 35.8bn dollars (16.6% up). Trade surplus decreased by 287m dollars to 54.4bn dollars from 2001.

Russia's trade turnover with CIS countries in 2002 was 25.8bn dollars and stayed practically at the 2001 level. Exports grew by 6.7% to 15.6bn dollars, but imports decreased by 8.9% to 10.2bn dollars. Trade surplus with these countries stood at 5.4bn dollars, an increase of 2bn dollars from 2001. CIS countries accounted for 17% of Russia's trade turnover in 2002, including 14.7% in exports and 22.2% in imports.

10 February 2003 Vladimir Putin arrives in France on a state visit.

10 February 2003 Defence minister Sergey Ivanov visits Italy. He says “Russia wants the Iraq issue to be resolved exclusively within the framework of the UN Security Council and in a peaceful manner.” He says Russia is ready to provide reconnaissance aircraft the UN could use to conduct air surveillance of Iraqi territory. He warns that Al-Qaeda is defeated but not destroyed and that there are training camps for terrorists, including those from Chechnya, in a number of regions adjoining Afghanistan, and that these terrorists can use weapons of mass

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destruction or chemical agents in any part of the globe, including Europe. Ivanov says Russia want to enhance its military cooperation with the EU. He refers to the provision of dual-purpose transport systems and logistics and support equipment. "We are aware that three countries - France, Italy and Germany - may serve as the driving force of such cooperation."

10 February 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov expresses satisfaction with the positive moments in Iraq's interaction with Unmovic and the IAEA at a Moscow meeting with Iraqi ambassador Abbas Khalaf.

Deputy Foreign Minister Georgiy Mamedov confirms that Moscow calls for further and more efficient international inspections in Iraq, and for the soonest beginning of a direct dialogue between Washington and Pyongyang.

10 February 2003 acting Iraqi Oil Minister Samir al-Najm says "we consider the LUKoil theme exhausted, as the Russian company has failed to fulfil its commitments under the agreement, and the Iraqi side is not to blame for this". Lukoil president Vagit Alekperov says the contract is still valid.

10 February 2003 The Russia-NATO Council meets in Moscow. Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Chizhov meets NATO Assistant Secretary-General Guenther Altenburg.

11 February 2003 The Council of Europe's human rights commissioner, Alvaro Gil-Robles, says the Council of Europe is meeting the Russian president's envoy for human and civil rights in Chechnya, Abdul-Khakim Sultygov.

11 February 2003 The MFA welcomes the statement of the Lithuanian Defence Ministry's state secretary confirming Vilnius's intention to accede to the CFE Treaty.

11 February 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov says Russia is ready to take part in examining specific proposals aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of international inspections in Iraq. He says the French delegation had circulated proposals at the UN on reinforcing the inspections regime in Iraq and increasing the number of international inspectors in the country. He says he "does not regard the adoption of new resolutions at the UN Security Council as obligatory".

Air force spokesman Col Aleksandr Drobyshevskiy says the Russian air force is ready to offer An-30 reconnaissance aircraft to the UN for intensified inspections in Iraq.

Head of the Duma International Affairs Committee Dmitriy Rogozin says Russia could mediate between Europe and the USA over Iraq.

Vladimir Putin is interviewed on French TV. He says Russia sees no need as yet to use its veto in the UN Security Council.

Dr Mark A Smith

11 February 2003 Deputy director-general of Atomstroyeksport Igor Prikhidko says Atomstroyeksport has started technical assessment of the possible building of a second power unit at the Bushehr nuclear power plant in Iran.

11 February 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Losyukov says Russia believes that "it does not make sense to take the issue of North Korea's nuclear programme onto such a high international level as the UN Security Council". He says Russia will try to promote a direct US-North Korean dialogue.

12 February 2003 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov and US Secretary of State Colin Powell have a telephone conversation. They discuss Iraq and North Korea.

The Duma issues a statement on the settlement of the Iraq problem, urging it be resolved on the basis of international law.

Valeriy Manilov, first deputy head of the Federation Council committee for defence and security, says the Federation Council "has given strong and emphatic support for the course followed by President Vladimir Putin which is aimed at settling the situation around Iraq by political and diplomatic means". This follows a Federation Council meeting which heard a report by Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Saltanov.

12 February 2003 Vladimir Putin says that at present unilateral use of force against Iraq is unacceptable. He says that if Russia thinks it necessary it will use its veto. He also says that "unilateral action against Iraq will not help strengthen the antiterrorist coalition ... it would be even worse if there were a split in the UN Security Council. With all the disagreements on the Iraqi problem and irrespective of the positions, we are ready for joint work."

Putin says he believes that the tough US stance has helped to soften Iraq's position. "Without the tough US position, the present level of cooperation on the part of Iraq would not have been possible."

Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov is interviewed in *Le Figaro*. He says that the joint Russian-Franco-German declaration was not a challenge to the USA.

CPRF leader Gennadiy Zyuganov says he believes that "the start of war in Iraq will signify a war against the entire Arab and Islamic world, against a unified Europe and Russia".

12 February 2003 Atomic Energy Minister Aleksandr Rumyantsev says Iran at present does not have the technical capability to enrich uranium. "Iran is capable of processing uranium as an ore, but they cannot conduct the isotopic enrichment of uranium." He says Russia will not cooperate with Iran in this area.

Deputy Atomic Energy Minister Valeriy Govorukhin says that Moscow has rejected Tehran's repeated requests to develop uranium deposits, stressing that Iran has no capabilities to create its own uranium fuel cycle.

12 February 2003 The MFA says that it is quite possible that Russia and the USA could simultaneously ratify the SORT Treaty in the next few months.

13 February 2003 Vladimir Putin says the UN Security Council will define its position on Iraq after studying the report of the international inspectors. "In a few days' time the inspectors are to make a report at the UN Security Council. They are to say if they need anything else for their efficient work in Iraq. If indeed they need something, the UN Security Council will make additional demands to Iraq and, depending on how they are received, a decision will be taken ... if Iraq cooperates, there will be one situation, if it does not - we will study the situation. War is the last resort. At the present moment there is no need for war."

13 February 2003 Kurdistan National Assembly speaker Roz Nuri Shawez, says he hopes that Russia will provide them with humanitarian aid when the USA starts military operation against Iraq. Shawez says he had talks with representatives of the Russian Emergencies Ministry and the Foreign Ministry.

14 February 2003 Igor Ivanov speaks at the UN following Hans Blix' report to the UN on the weapons inspections in Iraq. He says the UN Security Council has a real chance of resolving the problem of Iraq by political means, and this chance should not be missed. He urges Iraq "to step up cooperation with the UN inspectors". This would be "above all, in Iraq's own interests".

Igor Ivanov says the report given by the chief international inspectors in Iraq, Hans Blix and Mohammad al-Baradi'i, at the UN Security Council "shows that clear progress has been made by the inspectors." He says Russia "supports the proposal by France to hold a sitting of the UN Security Council on 14 March to discuss Iraq."

Igor Ivanov has an article in the *Financial Times* on the Iraq crisis (this appears in *Vedomosti* on 17 February).

14 February 2003 Presidential aide Sergey Yastrzhembskiy say Russia is expecting a number of extremist groups operating in the North Caucasus to be put on the US Department of State lists of terrorist organizations.

14 February 2003 The State Customs Committee says Russia's foreign trade surplus with European Union (EU) member states amounted to 19.16bn dollars in 2002. Russia's exports to EU countries rose by 1.9% on the year to 37.35bn dollars, while imports rose by 17.9% on the year to 18.19bn dollars.

14 February 2003 The 12th session of the joint consultative group of Belarusian and Russian defence ministers takes place in Minsk.

15 February 2003 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov meets Council of Europe Human Rights Commissioner Alvaro Gil-Robles.

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Igor Ivanov meets Chough Soon-hyung, special envoy of the president-elect of the Republic of Korea.

15 February 2003 Vladimir Putin and European Commission President Romano Prodi speak by telephone on Iraq and Russia-EU relations.

Putin has a telephone conversation with Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien to discuss the situation in Iraq.

16 February 2003 Russian foreign minister's special envoy Andrey Vdovin has talks in Cairo with political adviser to the president of Egypt Usamah al-Baz, and foreign minister of Saudi Arabia Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal Bin-Abd-al-Aziz Al Sa'ud.

16 February 2003 The director of the MFA's Department for the Middle East and North Africa, Mikhail Bogdanov, has ended a visit to Algeria. He discussed the settlement in West Sahara, the Iraqi crisis and the Middle East situation.

17 February 2003 Igor Ivanov writes in *Vedomosti* on the Franco-German-Russian initiative to achieve a peaceful settlement of the Iraqi crisis.

Igor Ivanov says that the political possibilities for solving the situation around Iraq have not been exhausted yet.

Mikhail Margelov, head of the Federation Council's international affairs committee, says Russia may veto a new UN Security Council resolution on Iraq if it finds it unacceptable. He says Russia's economic interests in Iraq must be protected.

17 February 2003 The Russian foreign minister's special envoy Andrey Vdovin and the Arab League's Secretary-General Amr Musa meet in Cairo to discuss the Iraq problem and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

17 February 2003 Croat President Stipe Mesic visits Moscow for talks with Vladimir Putin. Moscow and Zagreb sign "cooperation documents related to the Druzhba-Adria oil pipeline," Russian President Vladimir Putin announced. Once the Druzhba and Adria oil pipelines are linked, the resulting 3,000-kilometre section will carry Russian oil to the Mediterranean via the Croatian port of Omisalj on the Adriatic coast. "This route gives Russian oil access to the world market that bypasses the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles."

17 February 2003 Igor Ivanov says the attempts of a number of Western powers unilaterally to resolve security issues in the globalization era are "unacceptable".

17 February 2003 A delegation from MinAtom visits Iran to discuss the possible construction by Russian specialists of another generating set at the Bushehr nuclear power station.

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17 February 2003 Deputy Economic Development and Trade Minister Maksim Medvedkov says Russia is "technically ready to join the WTO" this year, but disagreements with several WTO members may keep Russia out of the WTO for a long time.

17 February 2003 President Vladimir Putin signs a decree to send Interior Ministry officers to serve in the United Nations' mission to Sierra Leone.

17 February 2003 Russian and Brazilian foreign ministers Igor Ivanov and Celso Amorim meet in Moscow. They confirm their countries' adherence to multipolar world order based on the UN Charter.

17 February 2003 Russian permanent representative to NATO Aleksandr Kelin is interviewed in *Kommersant*.

18 February 2003 ITAR-TASS reports FSB sources as informing it that foreign mercenaries from Turkey and a number of Arab countries are still involved in terrorist activities in Chechnya.

18 February 2003 Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev has talks with Vladimir Putin in Moscow.

18 February 2003 Igor Ivanov says Moscow welcomes the statement on Iraq adopted at the EU summit on 17 February.

Vladimir Rushaylo says Russia favours a political settlement of the Iraqi conflict through international law. He recalls that Russia, Germany and France share this stance and have repeatedly voiced it. "Therefore, should (Iraq) be found in violation of international law, the appropriate norms of international law should be applied to settle the problem."

Chairman of the Duma Committee for International Affairs Dmitriy Rogozin says the USA should pay more attention to what was said by the EU leaders, who supported the settlement of the solution around Iraq by peaceful means. "If the United States decides to act in contravention of the United Nations, a dangerous precedent will be created for other countries in the settlement of international conflicts."

The MFA says no decisions have yet been taken on any evacuation of Russian citizens from Iraq.

The Russian air force says it has prepared two An-30B Clank surveillance aircraft for possible use by UN inspectors in Iraq.

Deputy foreign minister Yuriy Fedotov says in Bulgaria that Russia thinks there is no need for a new resolution of the UN Security Council on Iraq, and the international inspectors have enough powers stipulated by Resolution 1441. He says that however Russia is ready to discuss drafts of new resolutions on Iraq if there are any. "We do not exclude the possible adoption of one or several

resolutions, which would broaden the powers of the international inspectors. Yet if a draft resolution stipulating the use of force in Iraq is offered, Russia will not support it."

18 February 2003 MFA spokesman Aleksandr Yakovenko calls for a rapid and negotiated solution to the security issues in Korea, primarily through direct talks between North Korea and the USA.

Deputy foreign minister Aleksandr Losyukov says Moscow is opposed to plans to discuss imposing sanctions against North Korea, at a UN Security Council meeting that will focus on the North Korean nuclear programme. He opposes sanctions against North Korea and opposes Russia acting as a broker between the USA and North Korea.

18 February 2003 The secretary of the Russian Security Council, Vladimir Rushaylo says the UN has been and still is at the centre of making decisions on fighting terrorism.

18 February 2003 The MFA say it expects that the position of the European Court of Human Rights will be taken into account in court trials of World War II and Soviet law-enforcement veterans in the Baltic States. The 1950 European Convention on Human Rights contains the principle that nobody can be sentenced for actions that did not constitute a criminal offence under national or international law at the time they were committed.

18 February 2003 Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze and Russian Federation President Vladimir Putin talk over the telephone. Putin stresses the major importance of the Georgian authorities' decision to renew the mandate of the collective peacekeeping forces in the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict zone.

Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov and his Georgian counterpart Irakli Menagharishvili meet to discuss the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict. Menagharishvili says Tbilisi agrees to prolong the mandate of the CIS Collective Peacekeeping Force by another six months without binding it to other issues unrelated to the Collective Peacekeeping Force.

18 February 2003 Igor Ivanov says Russia is for an early implementation of the plan for the settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict worked out by the four international mediators - Russia, the USA, the EU and the UN.

18 February 2003 Spanish foreign minister Ana Palacio visits Moscow for talks with Igor Ivanov.

18 February 2003 Igor Ivanov says Russia is interested in the presence of OSCE observers in Chechnya.

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18 February 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Georgiy Mamedov and the general director for political and security affairs at the French Foreign Ministry, Stanislas Lefebvre de LaBoulaye have talks in Paris. They discuss the G8 summit in Evian in June.

19 February 2003 The Eurasian Economic Community meets in Moscow. Member countries are Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan. Mikhail Kasyanov proposes to set up a gas alliance within the framework of the Community.

19 February 2003 Deputy Defence Minister Aleksandr Kosovan says the eighth round of Russian-Georgian talks on military issues has been "extremely difficult". He says that "the major problem is the military bases in Gudauta". The sides agree that Moscow and Tbilisi will set up two commissions led by Russian Minister of Industry, Science and Technology Ilya Klebanov and Georgian Foreign Minister Irakli Menagharishvili.

19 February 2003 European Commission Chairman Romano Prodi visits Moscow for talks with Vladimir Putin.

19 February 2003 The MFA says it "is deeply concerned over the continued missile strikes the US and British air forces are delivering on various facilities in Iraq in the so-called no-fly zones."

19 February 2003 The MFA expresses concern on the current situation in the Palestinian territories. Israeli troops are conducting a large scale operation in the Gaza strip.

19 February 2003 The first deputy chief of the General Staff, Col-Gen Yuriy Baluyevskiy, says the Russian armed forces do not plan to participate in any military operations in the event of the USA starting a war against Iraq. He also states that there are no plans to put the armed forces on heightened combat alert if war breaks out in Iraq.

Thomas Lantos, a member of the International Relations Committee of the House of Representatives of the US Congress, has talks with Igor Ivanov in Moscow. Ivanov says cooperation between Moscow and Washington in settling the Iraq situation may become a test for the maturity of Russian-American relations.

Vladimir Putin and his Chinese counterpart, Jiang Zemin, speak over the phone and exchange opinions on Iraq.

19 February 2003 Indian External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha visits Moscow.

19 February 2003 Deputy foreign ministers Aleksandr Saltanov and Aleksandr Losyukov receive special envoy of the Japanese government Shotaro Yachi.

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20 February 2003 The MFA criticises the Lithuanian government for allowing a conference in support of Chechen separatists in Lithuania on 21 February.

Presidential aide Sergey Yastrzhembskiy welcomes an announcement by US Secretary of State Colin Powell that three groups active in Chechnya are to be included on the list of international terrorist organizations.

20 February 2003 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov says that Russia believes the agreement of a coordinated position on Iraq within the UN Security Council to be essential. He claims that pressure is being exerted on the international inspectors in Iraq, with the aim of securing the necessary conclusions from them on the results of their inspections. He urges Iraq to fully cooperate with the inspectors.

20 February 2003 Secretary of the Security Council Vladimir Rushaylo visits Azerbaijan. He says the deployment of American troops near Iraq "is preventive in nature, nudging Iraq in the direction of fulfilling UN Security Council resolutions".

21 February 2003 Goskomstat says Russia's foreign trade surplus totalled 46.416bn dollars in 2002, against 47.851bn dollars in 2001. Foreign trade totalled 167.456bn dollars in 2002, up 7.8% from 155.379bn dollars in 2001. Exports rose 5.2% from 101.615bn dollars to 106.936bn dollars, and imports went up 12.6% from 53.764bn dollars to 60.52bn dollars.

Russian exports to fellow CIS countries totalled 16.246bn dollars in 2002, up 6.9% year-on-year. Exports to non-CIS countries were up 4.9% to 90.69bn dollars. Imports from CIS countries dropped 5.5% to 12.32bn dollars, while imports from non-CIS countries increased 18.4% to 48.2bn dollars.

21 February 2003 Deputy Finance Minister Sergey Kolotukhin says Russia's state foreign debt excluding guarantee commitments totalled 120bn dollars at the end of 2002.

21 February 2003 South Korean military officials observe large-scale exercises in the Far East Military District.

21 February 2003 The MFA says that Russia "supports the initiative of France to hold a UN Security Council meeting at foreign minister level on 14 March in New York on the Iraqi problem."

Iraqi ambassador Abbas Khalaf says Russia and Iraq have signed contracts worth 6bn dollars since 1996 under the oil-for-food programme. He says that Iraq's debts to Russia stand at 7bn dollars.

21 February 2003 Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov visits Poland.

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22 February 2003 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov and his Canadian counterpart, Bill Graham, discuss Iraq over the phone.

Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov says Russia will be against a UN Security Council resolution which will automatically sanction the use of force in Iraq.

Chairman of the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs Yevgenny Primakov visits Iraq at the request of Vladimir Putin.

22 February 2003 Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma has talks with Vladimir Putin in Moscow on the planned Russo-Ukrainian-German gas consortium.

22 February 2003 Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka arrives in Moscow.

22 February 2003 Russian ambassador to Japan Aleksandr Panov says Russia is planning to provide 46m dollars to Afghanistan this year within the framework of assistance to the creation of a national army and the law-enforcement bodies in Afghanistan.

23 February 2003 Vladimir Putin and British Prime Minister Tony Blair discussed Iraq over the phone.

Putin and Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi discuss the Iraq situation by telephone.

24 February 2003 The Russian and French presidents, Vladimir Putin and Jacques Chirac, have a telephone conversation. They discuss Iraq.

Russian ambassador to the United Nations, Sergey Lavrov, rejects any military solution to the problem of Iraq, and says the international community has issued no mandate to change the regime in Baghdad.

Head of the Presidential Administration Aleksandr Voloshin has arrived in Washington. He will discuss Iraq with Secretary of State Colin Powell and National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice.

Igor Ivanov is interviewed on Gazeta.ru website. He discusses Iraq, Korea and EU visas. He says there must be no unilateral action against Iraq.

25 February 2003 Vladimir Putin instructs the government to form a single economic zone of Russia, Belarus, Ukraine and Kazakhstan.

25 February 2003 The US Department of Energy signs a contract with the Russian Ministry of Atomic Energy for the purchase of plutonium-238, to be used as energy source in the US space programme. The commercial contract is intended for five years. The deliveries are to be started in 2004.

25 February 2003 Russia, Germany and France circulate a memorandum at the UN Security Council calling for the strengthening of the regime of inspections in Iraq.

25 February 2003 US Under Secretary of State John Bolton visits Moscow to discuss Iraq. Washington would like Russia not to use its veto and not to abstain from voting, and to support the idea set forth in the resolution on Iraq proposed by the US. Bolton also discusses a wide spectrum of international issues, including cuts in Russia's strategic offensive weapons and Iran.

Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Saltanov says "the resources for a peaceful settlement of the Iraqi crisis have not been exhausted". He says the UNMOVIC inspectors should continue to do their work in Iraq.

25 February 2003 Col-Gen Valentin Bogdanchikov, first deputy head of the Defence Ministry's department in charge of international military cooperation, says the MOD is interested in broader involvement of its military contingents in peacekeeping operations under UN auspices. "The absence of the necessary funds has prompted Russia to refuse to send its servicemen with UN missions to Congo, Ethiopia, East Timor and other countries. Today, Russia ranks only 30th among the UN's 88 members in terms of involvement in peacekeeping operations." Russian contingents are currently taking part in only three UN peacekeeping operations, namely in Kosovo, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Sierra Leone in Western Africa.

The Russian budget for 2003 assigns 37m dollars for peacekeeping. 75m dollars was allocated in 2001, 46m dollars in 2002. Russian military contingents in Kosovo and Bosnia have been reduced to 650 and 350 respectively.

25 February 2003 The MFA says the launch of a Silkworm missile by North Korea on 24 February is not a violation of missile technology control regimes or other international arms controls.

26 February 2003 German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder arrives in Moscow for talks with Vladimir Putin. They discuss Iraq. Putin says Russia is not prepared to back a UN Security Council resolution which would automatically open the way for a war in Iraq.

The Russian Emergencies Ministry is ready to render assistance to Iraqi refugees in case of a military operation in Iraq.

26 February 2003 Vladimir Putin says Russia has positively responded to Germany's request to allow land transport of German military freight to Afghanistan. Putin stresses this was an unprecedented decision for Russia and there had been no such agreements with NATO states before.

26 February 2003 Igor Ivanov visits China. He says "Russia and China are in favour of a political solution of the Iraqi problem under strict adherence to the relevant UN Security Council resolutions". He says the positions taken by Russia

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and China on the subject of Iraq are "almost identical". Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Losyukov also arrives in China from South Korea. He says the USA and North Korea should hold direct talks.

26 February 2003 The Russian president's envoy for the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Vitaly Vorob'yev says Russia is supporting India's bid to join the SCO. Vorob'yev also says that "Pakistan and some other countries have voiced their intention" to join the organization. Vorob'yev says "it is still too early to speak about concrete dates of an enlargement of the 'Shanghai six'".

26 February 2003 Defence minister Sergey Ivanov visits Azerbaijan. He says Russia does not plan any weapons deliveries to Armenia and Azerbaijan that might destabilize the situation in the region.

26 February 2003 The Russian president's special envoy for Caspian issues, Deputy Foreign Minister Viktor Kalyuzhnyy, says Russia does not approve of Kazakhstan's intention to create its own navy in the Caspian Sea. Representatives of the five Caspian sea states are meeting in Azerbaijan to discuss the new convention on the status of the Caspian Sea.

26 February 2003 Vladimir Putin and German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder give a press conference in Moscow. They say that the Iraq crisis must be resolved peacefully.

27 February 2003 Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) Abdelouahed Belkeziz announces plans to enlarge humanitarian aid to Chechnya.

27 February 2003 Igor Ivanov visits China. He and the Chinese foreign minister Tang Jiaxuan sign a joint communiqué. They advocate a political settlement for the Iraq problem. Ivanov says cooperation in the energy sphere to be the most important aspect of economic relations between Russia and China.

Igor Ivanov says he sees the US presence in Central Asia as part of the anti-Taleban campaign and therefore temporary.

Igor Ivanov says that the Shanghai Cooperation Organization "could play the role of one of the important props of a multipolar world order".

27 February 2003 Russian and US presidents Vladimir Putin and George Bush speak by telephone. They discuss Iraq, North Korea, and US-Russian cooperation.

27 February 2003 At a meeting of G8 political directors in Paris Deputy Foreign Minister Georgiy Mamedov reaffirms "Moscow's firm position in support of a peaceful settlement to the explosive situation in Iraq, based on the French-German-

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Russian memorandum, which was submitted to the UN Security Council with Chinese support".

27 February 2003 Andrey Vdovin, the Russian foreign minister's special envoy and ambassador at large travels to the Middle East.

27 February 2003 An MOD source says Russian military observers are currently taking part in 10 peacekeeping operations under UN auspices in various parts of the world. 96 officers are taking part in peacekeeping activities under the UN auspices. The largest Russian peacekeeping contingents are in the Democratic Republic of Congo (29 servicemen), Western Sahara (25) and Sierra Leone (11). Russian military observers are also in the UN Iraqi-Kuwaiti mission (11 servicemen), the UN mission to Ethiopia and Eritrea (6), and in Bosnia Hercegovina, Kosovo, East Timor, and the Middle East.

28 February 2003 Russia, Georgia and Azerbaijan hold border guard exercises.

28 February 2003 An MFA statement says there is no reason to say that Iraq has let slip the last opportunity to disarm. It says progress is being made in implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1441.

The MFA says US and UK air strikes against Iraq in the no fly zones are unjustified.

The Russian Embassy in Iraq says Russian diplomats' families have been evacuated.

Igor Ivanov says in China that Russia may use its right of veto on the Iraqi resolution.

Vladimir Putin says "Russia's position on Iraq is supported by an overwhelming majority of UN members, most UN Security Council members and most of its permanent members". He says the UN should only have the aim of disarming Iraq.

28 February 2003 Vladimir Putin says that Russia intends to continue working actively to bring about a constructive dialogue between North Korea, the USA and the international community.

Vladimir Putin and his Finnish counterpart Tarja Halonen talk by telephone.

March

1 March 2003 Vladimir Putin sends a message to the Arab League summit in Cairo which is discussing Iraq.

The MFA says it welcomes the statement made by US Secretary of State Colin Powell to the effect that Washington will not immediately submit the new draft

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resolution on Iraq for voting at the UN Security Council as an additional chance to reach consensus at the Security Council on ways of resolving the Iraqi crisis.

The MFA welcomes Iraq's decision to begin to scrap its Al-Samud-2 -missiles.

1 March 2003 Duma chairman Gennady Seleznev visits Tunisia. He says Russia's position on a Middle East settlement has not changed: Israel must fulfil the relevant UN Security Council resolutions to "enable an independent state of Palestine to be formed". He accuses the USA of double standards over Iraq and Israel in the UN.

2 March 2003 Vladimir Putin visits Bulgaria. Several agreements are signed. They include a memorandum of drafting a long-term programme for cooperation in the power industry and one on further development of Russian-Bulgarian relations in deliveries and transit of Russian gas.

2 March 2003 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov has telephone negotiations with his French and German counterparts. Russia, France and Germany have called for further international inspections in Iraq.

2 March 2003 Andrey Vdovin, the foreign minister's special envoy for the Middle East, meets Yasir Arafat, leader of the Palestinian National Authority and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

3 March 2003 The OSCE and the Council of Europe say they will send observers to Chechnya "immediately prior to the date" of the referendum on the draft constitution on 23 March.

3 March 2003 Yuriy Baluyevskiy, first deputy chief of the General Staff, says Russia has sent her representatives to the UN to discuss at the UN Security Council the possibilities for Russian servicemen taking part in the monitoring of facilities in Iraq.

3 March 2003 The MFA expresses concern over Israeli raids on refugee camps in the Gaza strip.

3 March 2003 The MFA says it is ready to help in the resolution of the Cyprus problem on the basis of UN resolutions.

4 March 2003 Duma International Affairs Committee chairman and head of the Russian delegation to PACE Dmitriy Rogozin rejects a proposal to set up a war crimes tribunal for Chechnya. The proposal was made by Rudolf Bindig, a member of the PACE Legal Affairs and Human Rights Committee.

4 March 2003 Vladimir Putin and his Lithuanian counterpart, Rolandas Paksas, have discussions by telephone.

4 March 2003 The MFA expresses concern over the intensification of US and British air strikes against facilities in the no-fly zones in southern and northern Iraq.

Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov says Russia finds it unjustified to submit the draft resolution on Iraq proposed by Britain, the USA and Spain for voting at the UN Security Council. He says: "We still hold a negative attitude to the draft resolution submitted by Britain and the United States with Spanish support". He says the draft resolution "absolutely groundlessly, and in contrast with the actual situation and progress in implementation of UN Security Council resolutions on Iraq, demands the immediate curtailment of inspections and opens the door to a military operation".

Igor Ivanov visits Britain for talks with Foreign Secretary Jack Straw and Prime Minister Tony Blair. He says Russia will not support any decision which directly or indirectly opens the way for war against Iraq. He says he does not rule out using Russia's veto in the UN Security Council. He says Russia will not abstain on any Iraq vote in the UN. He says differences over Iraq will not affect US-Russian relations and that Russia will not grant asylum to Saddam Hussein. He says the chances for a peaceful settlement of the Iraq problem are getting slimmer". Russia, France and China have converging views on Iraq.

4 March 2003 US Assistant Secretary of State for arms control Stephen Rademaker visits Moscow for talks on arms control (SORT and CFE).

4 March 2003 Duma international affairs committee chairman Dmitriy Rogozin says external interference, including military, in the processes developing on the Korean peninsula is unacceptable. He discusses the development of Russo-Chinese cooperation.

5 March 2003 MFA spokesman Yevgenny Voronin calls the PACE proposal for holding an international tribunal for investigating war crimes and crimes against humanity in Chechnya "absurd".

5 March 2003 The UN committee on anti-Taleban sanctions approves a joint proposal of Russia, the USA, China and a number of other states for the inclusion of three Chechen groups on a list of persons and organizations subject to sanctions under UN Security Council Resolutions 1267 and 1390. The three organizations subject to the sanctions were the Riyadh us-Saliheyn reconnaissance and sabotage battalion of martyrs, the International Islamic Brigade and the Islamic Special Purpose Regiment.

5 March 2003 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov says there is no need to adopt a new resolution on Iraq. "Moreover, there is no need to adopt a resolution that will stop international inspections and allow the use of force." Ivanov says Russia will use its

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veto at the UN Security Council vote on the resolution on Iraq proposed by the United States, Great Britain and Spain.

The Russian, French, and German foreign ministers issue a joint statement on Iraq.

A VTsIOM poll says about 93% oppose the bombing of Iraq and only 3% say they back it. The situation with possible military action against Iraq is the same: 91% of respondents are against it and only 5% are for it. 87% oppose a possible temporary occupation of Iraq by troops of the US and its allies, and only 6% say they favour it. 42% say Russia should not take part in such an operation, while at the same time remaining a US ally in the antiterrorist coalition. This information is based on the results of a poll totalling 1,600 people which was conducted in late February and early March.

5 March 2003 Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov and Belarusian Prime Minister Henadz Navitski have discussions in Moscow on prospects for using the Russian rouble as a single currency in the Union State of Russia and Belarus.

6 March 2003 Chechen separatist spokesman Movladi Udugov says in an interview with the Georgian newspaper *The Georgian Times*, that the USA and Israel are aiming to destroy Islam.

6 March 2003 Vladimir Putin says that Russia should join the WTO, but says that the issue should be considered "thoroughly and without haste".

6 March 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Saltanov says Russia opposes any UN resolutions clearing the use of force against Iraq. He says Iraq is no longer a menace to international peace and security "especially after the restoration of UN control, by means of inspections, over the banned Iraq military programmes". He says it is for the Iraqi people to decide on internal order in Iraq.

6 March 2003 The MFA says that "there is no alternative to a peaceful and negotiated solution of problems in the Korean Peninsula". Morris Strong, the UN secretary-general's envoy to North Korea, visits Moscow for talks at the MFA. Strong meets deputy foreign ministers Aleksandr Losyukov and Yuriy Fedotov and Deputy emergencies minister Yuriy Brazhnikov.

6-7 March 2003 The presidents of Russia (Vladimir Putin), Georgia (Eduard Shevardnadze) and Abkhaz prime minister (Gennadiy Gagulia) meet in Sochi. Putin and Shevardnadze agree that CIS peacekeeping forces should stay in Abkhazia.

7 March 2003 An expanded meeting of the Security Council together with the administration and government of Chechnya takes place in Khankala. It is devoted to the preparations in the republic for the constitutional referendum due on 23 March.

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7 March 2003 George W Bush and Vladimir Putin have a telephone conversation. They discuss the Iraq crisis ahead of the ministerial-level meeting of the UN Security Council in New York.

Putin has a telephone conversation with British Prime Minister Tony Blair on Iraq.

Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov says the report to the UN Security Council by chief weapons inspector Hans Blix reflects "substantial progress in Iraq's compliance with Resolution 1441". He opposes any new UN Security Council resolution on Iraq. Ivanov says he favours introducing even after the completion of international inspections in Iraq, a long-term monitoring service to make sure that Iraq does not rebuild weapons of mass destruction. "The creation of the long-term service to monitor the non-production of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq would become an insurance mechanism that would guarantee against the reappearance of weapons of mass destruction in that country."

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Saltanov says the consequences of a possible US military action against Iraq will undoubtedly be very negative. "One cannot rule out that the use of military force may engender such problems as will have very serious consequences for international relations ... no-one can rule out an upsurge in the wave of radicalism or economic destabilization ... the question of retaining the cohesion of the antiterrorist coalition may arise."

Deputy Foreign Minister Georgiy Mamedov says Moscow is ready to consider London's compromise proposals, but only on the condition that these are directed at finding a political solution to the Iraqi crisis. "If it is just about the form of giving one's blessing to the military operation against Iraq in the very near future, our position on a military operation is well known, we would consider this a tragic mistake in the present situation and we are against it. If, however, it is indeed about a sincere attempt to find a political solution to the very complicated current situation, then, of course, we are ready to seriously consider all the proposals."

Mikhail Margelov, chairman of the Federation Council's Foreign Affairs Committee, says Russia should refrain from vetoing the new US-drafted resolution on Iraq at the UN Security Council. "In order to preserve the antiterrorist coalition, it is important to prevent a split in the UN Security Council. If the split can only be averted by Russia refraining from using its right of veto, our diplomats should seriously think about that option." He is interviewed in *Vremya Novostey*.

7 March 2003 The eighth meeting of the Russian-Ukrainian mixed commission on cooperation takes place in Moscow. Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov says the end objective of the creation of a single economic space with Ukraine is the introduction of a single currency. On 23 February, the Russian, Kazakh, Belarusian and Ukrainian presidents agreed that their states would form a single economic space. In order to develop these agreements, the four countries have established a working group made up of deputy prime ministers which will draft relevant agreements on the functioning of the single economic space.

7 March 2003 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov says Moscow hails the unanimous decision by the US Senate to ratify the Russian-US SORT Treaty.

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7 March 2003 The MFA urges Israel and Palestine "to abstain from taking any steps that could jeopardize the innocent civilian population and do everything in their power to put their dialogue back on track as soon as possible".

7 March 2003 Atomic Energy Minister Aleksandr Rumyantsev says that under no conditions will Russia drop its cooperation with Iran in the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

7 March 2003 Presidents Vladimir Putin of Russia and Alyaksandr Lukashenka of Belarus meet in Sochi to discuss a draft version of the constitutional act of the Union of Russia and Belarus.

7 March 2003 The Conference on Disarmament's member nations and monitors give their approval to a Russian-Chinese document outlining possible elements of a future international legal agreement on the prevention of the deployment of weapons in outer space.

7 March 2003 The MFA says it is urging its G8 partners to launch specific bilateral projects for recycling Russia's chemical weapons and dismantling decommissioned nuclear submarines.

8 March 2003 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov says at the UN he does not agree with the view that Iraq can only be disarmed if there is a regime change.

Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov says Russia will block the revised draft resolution on Iraq at the UN Security Council. "The Russian side is confident that new resolutions are not needed now, but the inspectors' activities should be intensified in keeping with a precise programme of work that envisions clarification of the remaining ambiguities in the sphere of Iraq's disarmament."

Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov criticizes the new resolution that would give Iraq a 17 March deadline to comply with UN inspections or face war.

8 March 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Losyukov calls for the expansion of bilateral ties and cooperation with Iran. He meets Iran's ambassador to Russia, Gholamreza Shafe'i.

9 March 2003 Duma Chairman Gennadiy Seleznev visits Iraq.

Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov says the Iraq crisis will not damage ties with US. "For us, relations with the United States are of exceptional importance, and what is happening now - the Iraq crisis, the UN Security Council, the differences in the positions of a number of members of the council - we do not believe that these differences will prevent us from continuing to develop our relations." "Our countries have too many common interests in the world. We now have to actively engage in implementing the agreements on reducing [nuclear] offensive potentials, we have Afghanistan, we have the Middle East ... as concerns the Iraq crisis, here

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too, if you noticed, Russia has always stressed that it is trying to find a common language, with the USA, with Britain, and with the other countries which support a different point of view. We have never been supporters of artificially whipping up confrontation and polemics, the situation is now too serious to engage in polemics."

Vladimir Putin and French President Jacques Chirac have a telephone conversation on the Iraq crisis.

9 March 2003 MFA spokesman Aleksandr Yakovenko is interviewed on Russo-Iranian relations.

10 March 2003 Mikhail Margelov, chairman of the Federation Council Committee on International Affairs, and deputy speaker of PACE and head of the Duma International Affairs committee Dmitriy Rogozin are interviewed on *Ekho Moskv*y radio on the forthcoming Chechen referendum. They discuss the decision of the Council of Europe not to send observers to Chechnya for the referendum.

10 March 2003 Igor Ivanov says Russia will vote against the resolution on Iraq submitted to the UN Security Council by the USA, Britain and Spain, if it is put to a Security Council vote. He warns against attempts at regime change in Iraq. "The current ideas being bandied about by the mass media to the effect that US President George Bush wants to bring order to the Muslim world are a warning sign." Ivanov warns against the idea of seeking to export democracy to the Moslem world.

Vladimir Putin and German Federal Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder have a telephone conversation on the Iraq crisis.

Deputy Foreign Minister Georgiy Mamedov and the director of the German Foreign Ministry's political department, Michael Schaefer, hold talks on international security.

10 March 2003 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov visits Iran.

10 March 2003 Russian ambassador-at-large, Andrey Vdovin, welcomes the creation of the post of prime minister in the Palestinian National Authority as an important step in implementing the "road map" of Middle East peace settlement.

Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Saltanov says Russia has important long-term interests in the Middle East. "We sense that the states of the Middle East are also putting in a big effort to strengthen their interest in deepening interaction and cooperation with Russia in various areas. We are convinced that the further expansion of ties between Russia and the Arab states and Israel is an important factor in the Middle East situation and contributes to the stabilization of the situation in this region ... in recent years we have succeeded in making significant progress in developing cooperation with Middle East states in the trading, economic, cultural and other areas." At the same time, he acknowledged that "the volume of political interaction between Russia and the states of the region is still nevertheless greater than the level of ties in other spheres".

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11 March 2003 Presidential aide Sergey Yastrzhembskiy says Russia hopes the United States will include more terrorist organizations active in the North Caucasus on its list of international terrorist organizations that is being assembled by the US State Department. Yastrzhembskiy criticises the Council of Europe for deciding not to send observers to monitor the constitutional referendum in Chechnya.

11 March 2003 The head of the Kaliningrad oblast regional administration's department for international affairs and foreign economic relations, Viktor Romanovskiy, says residents of Russia's Kaliningrad Region will be able to obtain free 12-month visas for visits to Poland.

11 March 2003 The Russian ambassador at the United Nations, Sergey Lavrov says Russia does not accept any UN Security Council resolution which contains an ultimatum or provides for the automatic use of force.

11 March 2003 Director of the Russian Foreign Ministry's department for the Middle East and Africa Mikhail Bogdanov visits China for talks on Iraq.

Security Council Secretary Vladimir Rushaylo and Chinese ambassador to Moscow Zhang Deguang meet in Moscow to discuss strategic stability.

11 March 2003 Vladimir Putin and British Prime Minister Tony Blair have a telephone conversation on the Iraqi issue.

The Emergencies Ministry completes transporting Russian and CIS diplomats and specialists back to Russia from Iraq.

11 March 2003 Igor Ivanov and Iranian foreign minister Kamal Kharrazi note the successful completion of the second and third stages in the development of the South Pars gas deposit. They also note that construction of the Bushehr nuclear power plant is progressing according to plan, and they discuss measures to develop the North-South transport corridor. The sides show interest in launching a new project to creating an Iranian satellite communications system. The Russian-Iranian commission for trade and economic cooperation will meet on 16-18 March.

Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov completes his visit to Iran and leaves for Afghanistan.

11 March 2003 Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Saltanov says in Moscow that the increasing tension around Iraq "should by no means eclipse another very big international problem - achievement of an all-embracing settlement in the Middle East as a whole. The efforts of the four international mediators - Russia, United States, European Union and the United Nations, as well as contacts at other levels, are called upon to complete the work to implement the 'road map' for the phased settlement of the problem."

11 March 2003 The Russian military command expresses concern over flights of U-2S spy planes of the US air force over Georgia near the Russian border.

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11 March 2003 Atomic Energy Minister Aleksandr Rumyantsev attends a conference in Vienna on the safety of radioactive sources. He says that disintegration of the former USSR has upset control of radioactive sources and in some cases led to their loss in other CIS member-states.

12 March 2003 Deputy Economic Development and Trade Minister Maksim Medvedkov says Russia can still join the WTO in 2003.

12 March 2003 Deputy foreign minister Yuriy Fedotov says that any UN Security Council resolution that contains an ultimatum and opens a way to automatically launching military operations against Iraq will be unacceptable to Russia.

General Andrey Nikolayev, chairman of the Duma defence committee, says he believes the UN must prevent the forthcoming war against Iraq by urgently convening an international conference on the Iraqi issue.

Grigory Yavlinskiy says Russia must come up with an initiative to deploy a "broad international contingent around Iraq to monitor the situation, while remaining prepared to carry out a military operation if need be".

US Ambassador Alexander Vershbow is interviewed in *Izvestiya*. He warns Russia that if it vetoes the new resolution at the UN Security Council, this may result in curtailing Russian-US cooperation in many areas.

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

Deputy Foreign Minister Georgiy Mamedov says that if the USA attacks Iraq, Russia will not start an anti-American campaign but "will try to bring the situation back within the legal political framework as soon as possible". "We will not gloat over the tragic mistake committed by the USA or organize noisy campaigns ... our relations are too important for international peace to make them hostage to differences on the Iraq problem alone."

Igor Ivanov is interviewed by Iranian newspaper *Iran* on the Iraq crisis.

12 March 2003 The foreign ministers of Russia and Pakistan, Igor Ivanov and Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri, discuss the situation around Iraq and in Afghanistan, bilateral relations and other questions of mutual interest in a telephone conversation.

12 March 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Georgiy Mamedov has talks in Japan on strategic stability.

12 March 2003 The chiefs of staff of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan consider projects to create a unified system of military communication within the CIS space. They adopt a concept for setting up a single geo-information system. The session is chaired by the chief of Russia's General Staff, Anatoliy Kvashnin at the Headquarters for Coordination of CIS Military Cooperation.

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12 March 2003 Atomic energy minister Aleksandr Rumyantsev and US Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham sign agreements in Tomsk on production of plutonium. Russia will stop production of weapons-grade plutonium and will halt the last three nuclear reactors that were involved in producing it. These reactors are situated in Tomsk Region and in Krasnoyarsk Territory. In exchange, with US support, identical substitute power capacities will be set up and put into operation there based on organic fuel.

13 March 2003 Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov says Russia is ready to supply oil and gas to the Asia-Pacific region. The Russian government is discussing the prospects for the development of oil and gas fields in Eastern Siberia and Far East.

13 March 2003 Saudi Minister of Oil and Mineral Resources Ali Bin-Ibrahim al-Nu'aymi visits Moscow for talks with Energy Minister Igor Yusufov.

13 March 2003 Igor Ivanov visits Tajikistan.

13 March 2003 Vladimir Putin and French President Jacques Chirac hold a telephone conversation at the initiative of the French side.

13 March 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov says Moscow is studying Britain's proposals - the so-called "tests" - "designed to confirm Iraq's compliance with UN Security Council demands".

Yuriy Fedotov is interviewed on Egyptian television on the Iraq crisis.

Igor Ivanov says if a new draft resolution is put to vote at the UN Security Council that would directly or indirectly open the door to a military campaign against Iraq, Russia will vote against this document.

A delegation from the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan arrives in Moscow to hold consultations on the situation in Iraq with the MFA.

Andrey Piontkovskiy publishes an article in *Novaya Gazeta* criticising Russia's new alliance with France and Germany against US policy on Iraq.

Atomic Energy Minister Aleksandr Rumyantsev says Iraq does not have any nuclear fuel of Russian origin. "In 1993-1994, all Russian nuclear fuel was taken out of Iraq. This fuel was intended for an experimental reactor ... the experimental reactor built by Russia in Iraq was shut down and the fuel was removed. Nothing was left there."

14 March 2003 Director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime Antonio Maria Costa says additional measures must be taken to protect Russia from the flow of illegal drugs from Afghanistan. Costa was speaking after talks in Moscow. 99% of all drugs entering Russia originate in Afghanistan.

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14 March 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Georgiy Mamedov and Iranian ambassador to Russia, Gholamreza Shafe'i, meet to discuss Russo-Iranian cooperation within the civil nuclear sector.

14 March 2003 State-owned radio Voice of Russia (*Golos Rossii*) increases its broadcasting for Iraq in the wake of the deterioration of the situation in the region.

A VTsIOM poll reports that 71% believe that the USA tops the list of countries that are a threat to the world. 62% of respondents believe Iraq and the DPRK should not have weapons of mass destruction. Aerial bombing of Iraq is condemned by 93% of those polled and 91% are against a ground operation. 87% disapprove of plans for US troops to temporarily occupy Iraq. In October 2002, 69% of people polled described their attitude to the USA as good, in January the figure was 53%. It is now 48%.

Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov denies the assertion by US officials that Moscow may take steps to persuade Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to resign in order to avoid war.

The chairman of Russia's Union of Oil and Gas Producers, Yuriy Shafranik (also chairman of the Committee for Scientific, Cultural and Business Cooperation with Iraq), says if a new government comes to power in Iraq, Russia may lose the West Qurna-2 oil project. He says Russia will keep it if it succeeds in easing UN sanctions against Iraq.

14 March 2003 Deputy Defence Minister Gen Vladimir Isakov says Russia is resuming the withdrawal of armaments and other property of the Russian operational force deployed in Transdnestr.

14 March 2003 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov says Vladimir Putin plans to visit Tajikistan in the near future. He says Moscow and Dushanbe "intend to sign an agreement specifying the terms for the presence of a Russian military base in Tajikistan". A treaty on the status and terms of the base's presence in Tajikistan was signed in 1999 and ratified by the two countries.

14 March 2003 Air Force commander Vladimir Mikhaylov visits Kyrgyzstan. He says Russian Air Force personnel in Kant will total 450-500 men.

14 March 2003 Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov says the Russian government has chosen the combined Angarsk-Nakhodka project with a branch running to Daqing (China) as the route for the construction of an oil pipeline to export oil from Eastern Siberia to the countries of the Asia-Pacific region.

14 March 2003 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov welcomes the latest statement by US President George Bush on a Middle East settlement. He welcomes the intention to present a road map to the Israeli and Palestinian sides. This concerns a document agreed by the "quartet" of international mediators - Russia, the US, the EU and the

UN - during a ministerial meeting on 20 December 2002. He says Russia supports the appointment of a Palestinian prime minister with broad powers.

14 March 2003 Russian Energy Minister Igor Yusufov and Saudi Minister of Oil and Mineral Resources Ali Bin-Ibrahim al-Nu'aymi say Russia and OPEC are interested in the stability of the international oil market. Al-Nu'aymi is visiting Moscow. He says it is Saudi Arabia's goal to have Russian business represented in its economy and Saudi business represented in Russia. Al-Nu'aymi says he met representatives of the Russian oil companies Rosneftegazstroy, Zarubezhneftegazstroy and Komplmash. Energy Minister Igor Yusufov says that the main oil contacts between Russia and Saudi Arabia are the domain of "the larger companies, particularly Gazprom, Rosneft, and Zarubezhneft". Al-Nu'aymi says that oil and natural gas production, petrochemicals, electricity generation and water supplies are the main fields in which Russia and Saudi Arabia could work together. He says Saudi Arabia recently set up a holding company composed of 14 subsidiaries. Some of them are expected to set up joint ventures with Russian companies.

15 March 2003 Supreme Mufti Talgat Tadzhuiddin and Chairman of the Coordinating Centre of North Caucasus Muslims Khadzhi-Magomed Albogochiyev appeal to the Russian leadership for the continuation of efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement of the situation around Iraq.

Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov says that Moscow expects that chief UN weapons inspector for Iraq, Hans Blix, will make a new report at the UN Security Council early next week. "International inspections in Iraq should be continued in keeping with UN Security Council Resolution 1284." He says the inspections "should not be of interminable nature." The Russian-French-German memorandum that was submitted to the UN Security Council stipulates a period of 120 days.

A joint statement by Russia, France and Germany confirm that in the current circumstances nothing justifies abandoning the inspections process and using force in Iraq. The statement notes that "the reports of Unmovic and IAEA heads Hans Blix and Muhammad al-Baradi'i, which have been submitted to the UN Security Council on several occasions, have shown that the inspections are yielding results. The disarming of Iraq has begun. All the indications are that it can be completed within a short space of time and within the rules established by the Security Council. Iraq, for its part, has to cooperate actively and unreservedly." Russia, France and Germany propose that on 18 March, after the Unmovic programme has been submitted, the Security Council should gather at foreign minister level to approve the priority disarmament objectives and the adoption of a timetable, both demanding and realistic, for them to be met.

The MFA says that it believes the first twenty-five page report Baghdad has produced on chemical weapons shows that Iraq is cooperating more with the inspectors.

Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov publishes an article in *The Washington Post* on Russo-US relations. He says that Russia hopes relations with the USA will not be affected by what happens in Iraq.

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16 March 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov says the 15 March joint statement by Russia, France and Germany, urging the foreign ministers of the UN Security Council member states to meet on 18 March "is motivated by the need to preserve the unity of the UN Security Council and to confirm that there are no reasons for stopping inspection missions or for a hurried use of force against Iraq".

Russia's chief mufti Ravil Gaynutdin warns the USA and its allies against attacking Iraq as it might trigger up an unpredictable reaction in Muslim countries.

17 March 2003 Vladimir Putin says Russia is working on the development of the free trade zone on which an accord has been reached by the presidents of Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine.

17 March 2003 The Ministry of Finance says Russia has completed its latest payment to the International Monetary Fund. It paid 26,962,000 dollars in strict accordance with the payments schedule. This is the second of three payments in March. The third and final payment is also this amount, due on 28 March. The IMF has said Russia is due to pay it about 2.1bn dollars in 2003. Russia paid the IMF more than 350m dollars in January-February. On 1 January 2003, Russia owed the IMF about 6.4bn dollars.

17 March 2003 The MFA asks Russian nationals to leave Iraq and to refrain from travelling to that country. The MFA says even if a military operation against Iraq starts, the Russian embassy in Baghdad will continue its work in that country.

Vladimir Putin says a war in Iraq would be a mistake which would also destabilize the international situation as a whole.

Vladimir Putin and Jacques Chirac discuss the Iraq crisis by telephone.

Igor Ivanov says "there is no justification, including legal justification, for the use of force against Iraq, especially where reference is made to previous UN Security Council resolutions ... in view of the 16 March meeting of the leaders of the USA, Great Britain and Spain in the Azores at which they discussed the situation around Iraq, the Russian side deems it expedient to reiterate its commitment to a political settlement of the Iraqi problem." He says Resolution No 1441 does not give anyone the power to use force automatically. Russia considers that the Iraqi settlement process should remain under the control of the Security Council.

Deputy Minister Yuriy Fedotov says the British-US draft resolution on Iraq was doomed from the start.

Head of the Russian Orthodox Church, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Aleksiy II calls on the people of the world to stop military preparations around Iraq.

Duma Chairman Gennadiy Seleznev condemns the US position on Iraq and the US intention of presenting Iraqi President Saddam Hussein with an ultimatum.

17 March 2003 The standing Russian-Iranian commission on trade and economic cooperation begins its fourth meeting in Tehran. Russian Property Relations Minister Farit Gazizullin heads the Russian delegation.

18 March 2003 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov warns against using force against Iraq in circumvention of the UN Security Council. "No-one has the right to replace the UN Security Council and the UN in resolving this issue." He says: "Russia, France, Germany, China and a number of other members of the UN Security Council propose ... a meeting of the UN Security Council to hear the reports of the heads of Unmovic and the IAEA, Hans Blix and Muhammad al-Baradi'i, so that they can give a clear, objective picture of what stage of disarming Iraq we are at and what really needs to be done to achieve the completion of this process on the basis of the corresponding UN Security Council resolutions ... overall, we are convinced that the Iraq crisis, which does not currently present a threat to international peace and stability, has to be finally settled on the basis of all the existing UN Security Council decisions in this regard."

Igor Ivanov says most Russian citizens who were in Iraq have left the country. He says a minimal staff remains at the Russian Embassy in Baghdad.

Marshal Igor Sergeyeve, the Russian Federation president's aide on issues of strategic stability, says: "The consequences for international security in the event of a new war in Iraq will be unpredictable and extremely negative."

Security Council deputy secretary, Oleg Chernov, says in the event of war starting in Iraq, Russia will be seeking ways of bringing the situation back into peaceful channels.

The Ministry for Economic Development and Trade says Iraq's debt to Russia is 8.5bn dollars. Bilateral trade was worth 252.3m dollars in 2002. All of Russia's exports to Iraq have been under the UN's food for oil programme for Iraq. Russian companies bought 124 million barrels of oil from Iraq last year worth about 2.8bn dollars under the United Nations oil for humanitarian goods programme. The Ministry states that Russian companies accounted for some 35-40% of all Iraqi oil exports in 2002. Trade turnover between Russia and Iraq, not including transactions with Iraqi oil and humanitarian supplies from third countries, was 252.3m dollars in January-September 2002. Iraq has not exported anything to Russia since 1997. In 2001, trade turnover between the two countries stood at 186.9m dollars, and in 2000 it totalled 89.8m dollars.

Vladimir Putin and US President George Bush have a telephone conversation at the initiative of the US side. They discuss Iraq. Putin expresses regret at the US decision to use force against Iraq. Both sides stress that, despite the differences in approaches and evaluations, maintaining bilateral contacts is of particular significance in crisis situations such as the present one.

Deputy head of the Duma International Affairs Committee Sergey Shishkarev says the Duma Council has postponed the debate on ratifying the Russian-US treaty on reducing strategic offensive potential from 19 March to a later date. Shishkarev says that the decision had partly been caused by the Duma's attempt to have "a certain degree" of influence on how the Iraq conflict was developing.

The MFA says it favours ratifying the SORT Treaty without delay. "Russia's foreign-policy establishment remains in favour of ratifying this document soon, because it will promote stability and predictability in strategic relations between Russia and the USA in the long term". "It's an entirely realistic scenario for the Duma to shift the timeframes for ratifying the treaty in the event of the USA attacking Iraq."

Chairman of the Federation Council Sergey Mironov says Russia should continue to prepare the ratification of the Russian-US SORT Treaty regardless of the harsh statements and ultimatums the US has made to Iraq.

Duma speaker Gennadiy Seleznev states that if the USA launches a military operation against Iraq, Russia might postpone the ratification of the SORT Treaty for quite a long time. "If the Americans strike Iraq, the fate of this treaty will be altogether in question since the Americans will strike at international law and a new period will come - a period of the law of the jungle when the stronger will oppress the weaker. We do not want to be weak, which is why we will still find missiles handy as the Americans are afraid of only one thing - a retaliatory strike ... If the Americans are afraid of Iraq, which can cause nothing but a smile, let them know that there is a serious nuclear country which will really ensure the security of the international community and will never dare to act by the law of the jungle."

18 March 2003 Vladimir Putin and the new President of the People's Republic of China Hu Jintao speak by telephone on the Iraq crisis.

18 March 2003 Igor Ivanov says that Russia has come up with an initiative to set up a global security system within the UN and the international antiterrorist coalition. "This system should meet the vital interests of each country and guarantee international stability ... the process of forming the global system has been in progress since the inception of the antiterrorist coalition that, for the first time after World War II, has united the global community in the struggle against a common threat." He says the global security system "needs a commonly accepted coordinating centre ... this centre exists today: it is the UN, which has a universal nature and second-to-none experience in ensuring international peace and security."

Igor Ivanov says that Russia is ready to continue cooperation with the international antiterrorist coalition in the format of G8 and the UN Security Council. He says the UN must play the central role.

State Secretary and Deputy Defence Minister Col-Gen Igor Puzanov says the Russian armed forces will not be put on a high alert status in the event of a war in Iraq.

18 March 2003 Qatari Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Ahmad Abdallah al-Mahmud visits Moscow.

18 March 2003 The fourth Iran-Russia joint economic committee takes place in Tehran. They discuss oil and gas cooperation, namely the development of South Pars gas field and the Caspian Sea field. The Bushehr nuclear plant is scheduled to being operation in December 2004.

18 March 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Denisov says Russia is ready to work for Korea's nuclear-free status and to help the rapprochement between North and South Korea.

19 March 2003 The Duma unanimously ratifies a Russian-Kazakh agreement to divide the northern part of the Caspian seabed and a pertinent protocol of 6 July 1998.

19 March 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Georgiy Mamedov and US Deputy National Security Adviser Steven Hadley have a telephone conversation discussing Russo-US relations. They agree that the Iraq crisis will not damage the relationship.

The MFA says that the Iraq crisis can only be resolved by diplomatic means.

The chief of Russia's chemical disarmament commission, Sergey Kiriyyenko, denies that Iraq may have chemical weapons.

Sergey Shoygu, the emergencies minister, announces that Russia will provide humanitarian aid to Iraqi citizens who leave the country if the war begins. Russia plans to deploy its humanitarian mission in Iran.

Igor Ivanov arrives in New York to attend a session of the UN Security Council on Iraq at the level of foreign ministers. The Security Council is meeting at the initiative of Russia, France and Germany. Ivanov says: "Resolution 1441 does not envisage an automatic use of force against Iraq, and attempts to settle the crisis peacefully under the UN guidance must continue. No one has the power to substitute for the UN Security Council or for the UN generally ... Russia is confident that Iraq does not pose any threat and the crisis must be settled on the basis of provisions of the UN resolutions having effect now ... it is quite obvious that the military operation stands outside the format of law." Igor Ivanov says the resolution of the Iraqi crisis "is not possible without the UN Security Council".

19 March 2003 The MFA welcomes the appointment of Mahmud Abbas (Abu-Mazin) to the recently-created post of Palestinian prime minister.

20 March 2003 Vladimir Putin says the US military operation against Iraq is being carried out in defiance of international public opinion and in defiance of the principles and standards of international law and the UN Charter. He says the military operation against Iraq cannot be justified by anything, and "there was no need for it whatsoever ... if we allow international law to be replaced by fist-law, in which the one who is strong is always right, is entitled to do anything and is not restricted by anything in the choice of means to achieve his aims, then one of the basic principles of international law, the principle of inviolability of state sovereignty, will be put into question ... for these reasons Russia insists that military operations should be stopped without delay." He is convinced that the central role in resolving crises in the world should belong to the UN Security Council "... at the time of the start of the operation Iraq posed no threat either to the neighbouring states or to other countries and regions of the world, because after decades of blockade it is a weak country both militarily and economically."

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Putin sends a message to Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari confirming Russia's adherence to the UN Charter.

Igor Ivanov says Russia is profoundly disappointed over the US attack on Iraq. He says that the USA and Russia remain partners not adversaries in spite of differences over Iraq, and Russia will not violate the UN sanctions regime against Iraq.

The MFA sets up a special task head quarters to deal with the Iraq crisis. It is headed by Aleksandr Saltanov, a deputy foreign minister.

Aleksandr Saltanov addresses an expanded meeting of the Federation Council committee on international affairs on the Iraq crisis. He says Russia will try to move the handling of the crisis back into a legal framework.

Economic adviser to Vladimir Putin Andrey Illarionov says the anti-Iraqi war launched by the USA might have an adverse medium-term (ie five years) effect on the Russian economy.

The Duma appeals to Vladimir Putin to initiate the convening of a special session of the UN General Assembly to debate the issue of aggression by the USA and its allies against Iraq, a member of the UN.

Dmitry Rogozin, chairman of the Duma International Affairs Committee, says that the US attack on Iraq had not improved relations between the USA and Russia, which has denounced a military operation against that country. He says the "responsibility for a gradual restoration of Russian-American relations to their former level also lies with the USA".

Mikhail Margelov, chairman of the Federation Council Committee on International Affairs, says that Russia can and should take part in post-war settlement in Iraq under a UN aegis.

The Chairman of the Russian Union of Oil and Gas Producers, Yuriy Shafranik, says Russia's direct losses from the termination of contacts in Iraq as a result of the war could exceed 2bn dollars. The 1991 Gulf war inflicted 30-35bn dollars in total losses to Russia, while the total losses from the current war could jump to 40bn dollars.

20 March 2003 The Voice of Russia (*Golos Rossii*) radio station expands its programmes to the Middle East.

20 March 2003 The sixth session of the committee of security council secretaries of signatories to the Collective Security Treaty (Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan -) meets in Moscow and expresses concern over the start of the US military operation against Iraq.

20 March 2003 The Atomic Energy Ministry denies media reports that it is planning to work with Iran in enriching uranium.

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20 March 2003 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov meets his Kyrgyz counterpart Esen Topoyev, currently on a visit in Russia. They discuss the deployment of a Russian military base at the airfield Kant near Bishkek.

21 March 2003 Vladimir Putin addresses the sixth session of security council secretaries from countries participating in the Collective Security Treaty. He talks of the need to fight terrorism. He says the conflict in Iraq is no longer local and could have consequences for global security.

21 March 2003 The Chechenpress website says the foreign minister of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, Ilyas Akhmadov, has held numerous meetings with US political and public figures in Washington this week. He met former US President Jimmy Carter's national security adviser, Dr Zbigniew Brzezinski, and delivered a speech before the US Helsinki Committee which is the OSCE's US section.

21 March 2003 The Duma calls on Vladimir Putin to suggest introducing UN peacekeeping forces in Iraq to separate the conflicting parties.

Emergency Situations Minister Sergey Shoygu meets Vladimir Putin to discuss humanitarian aid to refugees from Iraq. The refugees are expected to arrive in Iran.

An MFA statement states that the unlawful actions by the anti-Iraq coalition may complicate the diplomatic solution of the Korean problem.

Mikhail Khodorkovskiy, head of Yukos, says Russia will have to negotiate business in Iraq with the regime that emerges there after the military operation has finished.

Finance Minister Aleksey Kudrin says Russian legislation allows the freezing of bank accounts if there is a suspicion of laundering of illegal financial funds or involvement in terrorism; but Russia has no such information as yet relating to Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein. The USA has demanded that Saddam Hussein's financial accounts all over the world be frozen.

Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov says that Moscow has not been asked by Washington to expel Iraqi diplomats and rejects in advance any possibility that Russia might do so.

Ivanov says that as many international mechanisms as possible should be used to resolve the Iraq crisis. He says the UN Security Council and UN General Assembly could be convened. He says that Russia "has repeatedly asked the USA exactly how Baghdad threatens Washington, but has never received an intelligible answer". He denies the US allegation that Iraq supports international terrorism. "There is no evidence that Iraq supports international terrorism. We have no facts confirming that."

Igor Ivanov warns that Iraq's occupation will be illegal in the absence of a relevant resolution by the UN Security Council. He says the war could lead to further instability in the Persian Gulf. He says Russia will not confront the USA over Iraq.

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Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Saltanov says there is no major cooling off in relations between Russia and the USA.

22 March 2003 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov says that Russia is "not interested in the aggravation of relations between the USA and Europe". He advocates a multipolar world.

Igor Ivanov says Russia will refuse to support a legal justification of the Iraq war if the issue is raised at the UN Security Council. He says the UN will not repeat the fate of the League of Nations. Igor Ivanov and US Secretary of State Colin Powell discuss the prospects for the future development of the situation around Iraq by telephone.

Iraqi ambassador to Russia Abbas Khalaf meet Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Saltanov in Moscow to discuss ways of settling the Iraqi situation.

The MFA urges Turkey not to send troops into northern Iraq.

22 March 2003 The MFA protests against intelligence flights by US planes near Russian borders. The MOD says they are operating from Georgia.

22 March 2003 Cuban Minister of Foreign Affairs Felipe Perez Roque arrives in Moscow for talks with his Russian counterpart Igor Ivanov and Russian parliamentarians on the crisis in Iraq and bilateral cooperation.

23 March 2003 Russian and Chinese Foreign Ministers Igor Ivanov and Li Zhaoxing discuss the Iraq crisis by telephone.

Igor Ivanov has a telephone conversation with his Indian counterpart Yashwant Sinha. They discuss Iraq.

The Emergencies Ministry starts flying humanitarian aid for Iraqi refugees to Iran.

24 March 2003 Vladimir Putin has a telephone conversation with US President George W Bush. He calls for averting a humanitarian catastrophe in Iraq.

Vladimir Putin calls on Iraq to comply with international law regarding POWs.

Vladimir Putin has a telephone call with new Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan. They discuss the Iraq crisis.

Igor Ivanov calls for the UN Security Council to discuss the situation in Iraq as soon as possible. "The UN and Security Council cannot of course be sidelined from what is happening in Iraq, and we hope that this will become the subject of a thorough and detailed examination." He also says that the United Nations, including its Security Council, needs reforming, and that the matter is under discussion.

Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says he believes that the military campaign in Iraq could spread beyond that country's borders.

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Yevgenny Primakov says that the war in Iraq could end up with the need to bring peacekeeping forces into that country. "The decision on military action in Yugoslavia was also made bypassing the UN, but the Security Council was able to make a decision to bring peacekeepers into Kosovo, which everyone supported."

The USA State Department protests to the MFA that some Russian companies are selling military hardware to Iraq while the USA is fighting against Saddam Hussein's regime. The USA claims that the Tula company KBR delivered to Iraq antitank guided missiles and the Moscow Aviakonversiya company delivered electronic interference equipment, which jams the guidance signals installed in aircraft and smart bombs. The claims are denied by Igor Ivanov.

The Russian Emergencies Ministry has delivered to Iran equipment necessary to set up a camp for Iraqi refugees.

24 March 2003 UN secretary-general's special envoy to Afghanistan, Lakhdar Brahimi visits Moscow. Russia calls for strengthening the central and coordinating role of the UN in building a peaceful, independent and neutral Afghanistan, which will live in peace with its neighbours and the rest of the world.

24 March 2003 Security Council Secretary Vladimir Rushaylo and his Georgian counterpart Tedo Japaridze meet in Moscow and discuss Caucasus security.

24 March 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Razov concludes talks in Brussels with EU and Lithuanian officials on transit to Kaliningrad Region by train.

24 March 2003 The Ministers of Defence and Atomic Energy Sergey Ivanov and Aleksandr Rumyantsev say Russia is worried by media reports that Western companies could have been involved in shipping technology to Iran that could be used to create nuclear weapons.

24 March 2003 The Russian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Foreign Ministry sign an agreement on cooperation and coordination.

25 March 2003 Minister Igor Ivanov sends a message to a number of Islamic organizations, including the Arab League, inviting them to take part in the restoration of Chechnya.

25 March 2003 Igor Ivanov writes on the Iraqi conflict in *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*. He calls for the UN to play the lead role in an Iraqi settlement.

Director of the International Organizations Department of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Andrey Granovskiy says Russia "agrees with the Syrian demand, put forward with the support of the Arab League, to hold an open sitting of the UN Security Council on Iraq".

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Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov says that the UN Oil-for-Food programme should be continued in the form in which it was adopted by the UN Security Council.

The council of the Federation Council adopts a draft statement on the armed action against Iraq.

25 March 2003 Russia agrees with the EU and Lithuania on a travel document between Kaliningrad and the rest of Russia.

26 March 2003 The Federation Council ratifies an agreement between Russia and Kazakhstan on delimiting the floor of the northern part of the Caspian Sea.

26 March 2003 A poll was conducted by the Russian Public Opinion Centre on 21-24 March among 1,600 people asking Russians about their attitude towards the USA. 35% of Russians described relations with the United States as normal and neutral, while another 28% said relations are chilly and 14% described them as tense. 10% of Russians characterize the ties as neighbourly, 7% say they are friendly and 2% say they are hostile.

Igor Ivanov addresses the Federation Council on Iraq. He is strongly critical of US and UK policy.

26 March 2003 The MFA calls military action in Iraq to be ended as soon as possible. "We believe that there is an urgent need for military action to be stopped and for efforts to solve the Iraq problem by peaceful means within the framework of the UN Security Council to be revived."

Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov has a telephone conversation with US Secretary of State Colin Powell to discuss consultations in the UN Security Council on the humanitarian programme in Iraq. Ivanov has a telephone conversation with UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan on the same subject.

The Emergencies Ministry completes the delivery of 94 tonnes of humanitarian cargoes for the crisis centre for Iraq functioning at the Iranian Foreign Ministry. Emergencies Minister Sergey Shoygu says Russia will continue to provide humanitarian aid to Iraqi refugees in Iran, despite a request by Iraqi ambassador to Russia Abbas Khalaf not to do so.

Deputy Prime Minister and Agriculture Minister Aleksey Gordeyev says Russia is ready to supply food wheat to Iraq as part of humanitarian aid.

Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov and his French counterpart Dominique de Villepin issue a joint statement on Iraq.

26 March 2003 Igor Ivanov expresses regret that Lithuania's position on Kaliningrad transit differs from the accords reached at the Russian-EU November summit.

26 March 2003 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says that Russia has asked the US for an explanation of the repeated flights of a U-2 spy plane in the vicinity of the Russian-Georgian border.

26 March 2003 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov has a telephone conversation with Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi. Kharrazi states Tehran's firm adherence to honouring its obligations in accordance with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. They also discuss Iraq.

Atomic Energy Minister Aleksandr Rumyantsev says Russia did not supply the uranium-enrichment equipment to Iran.

26 March 2003 Deputy Finance Minister Sergey Kolotukhin says Russia and the states which made up the former Republic of Yugoslavia have jointly agreed the sum of Russia's so-called clearing debt inherited from the Soviet Union at 1,291m dollars. In Belgrade, he held negotiations with the finance ministries' representatives of Serbia, Montenegro, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia, which are the legal successors of Yugoslavia. Russia will pay a total of about 700m dollars.

27 March 2003 Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov visits Romania and signs several cooperation agreements. Russia and Romania plan to sign a treaty next winter to set up a joint venture to sell Russian natural gas in Romania.

27 March 2003 Russian and German Foreign Ministers Igor Ivanov and Joschka Fischer speak by telephone on the Iraq crisis.

Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov has a telephone conversation with Greek Foreign Minister Yeoryios Papandreou. They discuss Iraq and the Middle East road map.

First Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov is interviewed in *Vremya Novostey*. He says the actions of the US-British forces in Iraq can be described as "military occupation."

Director-general of the Mashinoimport association Olga Vdovichenko says Iraqi-born employees of Russian companies who remained in Baghdad have asked the Russian government for humanitarian aid. She says a request for the delivery of 25m dollars' worth of staple food products to Iraq has been received through these channels from the Iraqi Trade Ministry.

Yuriy Fedotov, deputy foreign minister, says Russia believes that the UN Oil-for-Food programme for Iraq should be resumed as soon as possible. He says that "the UN Security Council in New York is now engaged in intensive consultations on a humanitarian resolution aimed at introducing temporary technical adjustments to the way the programme is being implemented".

Energy Minister Igor Yusufov says Russia is prepared to take part in the postwar economic restoration of Iraq. "We are working on returning all Russian companies that have interests in Iraq to their sites immediately after peace is restored and once we have estimated the condition of their equipment." He says the Russian-

Iraqi intergovernmental commission for trade and economic relations is still working despite the war. In 2002, Russia and Iraq drafted a long-term joint economic programme. The programme is being coordinated by the Russian government. The document was submitted to Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov for approval. However, the programme can not be approved at the present because of the war in Iraq.

28 March 2003 The North Caucasus Military District begins command post exercises. They will last until 4 April, around the waters of the Black and Caspian Seas. The war games are designed to train interaction of security agencies when fighting terrorism. Units of the Internal Affairs Ministry troops, the Emergencies Ministry and other ministries and agencies will attend the exercises.

28 March 2003 Director of the North America Department of the Foreign Ministry Igor Neverov says US-Russian differences over Iraq will not result in a return to the Cold War. "We will of course do everything to prevent any kind of roll-back in relations with the USA. Our strategic policy of partnership with the USA is not based on short-term considerations, it is a long-term policy ... a great deal has been done over the past two years actually to rid ourselves of the legacy of the Cold War, and we cannot allow what has been achieved to be wasted. There are, of course, differences and in practice the current acute situation in Iraq is a serious test for our relations, there is no secret about this, of course. But it is customary among partners to discuss differences honestly, the fundamental differences on Iraq."

Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Aleksey Kudrin says no matter what shape the postwar administration of Iraq takes, it should preserve continuity in the fulfilment of international commitments such as paying debts.

Vladimir Putin meets the leaders of Duma factions. He says:

"As we predicted, the war in Iraq is going beyond the boundaries of a local conflict by virtue of its consequences. This is the first time since the end of the Cold War that the world community has faced such a serious crisis and, in essence, the danger of undermining the foundations of global stability and international law.

Now we have to look for a solution to the situation that has arisen. We continue to be convinced that the only correct solution would be to halt military action immediately and to resume the process of political settlement within the framework of the UN Security Council.

In search of the solution, we are open to constructive collaboration with the world community, with all sides involved in this conflict, including, naturally, the United States of America. And of course, the most important task for the world community is to prevent the approaching humanitarian disaster in Iraq. As you are aware, Russia has already started preparing to help possible Iraqi refugees on the border between Iraq and Iran."

28 March 2003 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov meets Indian Foreign Secretary Kanwal Sibal in Moscow.

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28 March 2003 Finance Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Aleksey Kudrin says there has been substantial progress in the negotiations on Russian accession to the WTO. He is holding talks with the OECD and a high-ranking EU delegation in Paris.

29 March 2003 Vladimir Putin says he thinks that the war in Iraq is threatening to lead to a major catastrophe, and he has underlined the necessity of resolving the situation on the basis of UN Security Council resolutions.

Yabloko leader Grigoriy Yavlinskiy says the USA has made a gross political mistake by starting the war in Iraq. "By all means, it is in Russia's interest to preserve its strategic relations both with the Western Europe and the USA. The war in Iraq will not be the transition to a cold war between Russia and the USA, nor will it ruin the Russian-American strategic relations. This is not in our interests."

The chairman of the Committee on International Affairs of the Federation Council, Mikhail Margelov, says that the US military action against Iraq should not be viewed as aggression. "I do not think that it would be to our advantage to wish defeat on the USA strategically. The USA is our partner in the antiterrorist coalition. The USA is too strong to be defeated. The USA is too powerful to fail."

30 March 2003 Duma deputy speaker Vladimir Lukin, Sergey Karaganov and former ambassador Aleksandr Bovin discuss the Iraq conflict on "Vremena" broadcast on Channel One TV. They warn against taking an anti-American stance.

30 March 2003 Vladimir Putin and British Prime Minister Tony Blair speak by telephone. They discuss a range of practical issues in relations between Russia and the UK.

31 March 2003 The Energy Ministry and the International Energy Agency (IEA) sign a three-year cooperation agreement. In accordance with the agreement, the sides will consider Russia's participation in the IEA collective energy security system.

31 March 2003 The draft constitutional act of the Union State of Russia and Belarus is adopted.

31 March 2003 The secretary of the Security Council, Vladimir Rushaylo, calls for the cessation of hostilities in Iraq and the resumption of a political process

Deputy Foreign Minister Viktor Kalyuzhnyy is interviewed in *Vremya Novostey* on the prospects for Russian oil companies in Iraq after the conflict.

31 March 2003 The MFA says Moscow hopes that the "Palestinian leadership will do its utmost to put an end to any terrorist activities, and that the government of Israel will refrain from the use of force, which can complicate the situation with the Palestinian territories".

Dr Mark A Smith

31 March 2003 Deputy foreign minister Aleksandr Losyukov calls on South Korea to exercise "sober influence" on Washington in order to persuade it to start direct dialogue with Pyongyang. He meets national security aide to the president of the Republic of Korea, Ra Jong-yi, in Moscow.

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